



Rampalé

THE SIXTH GATE

Threshold Of Eternity

Téodoro Rampalé

My life changed forever when I realized that I am not a mortal, physically manifest, temporary body who has somehow acquired an inner spirit—a soul—but an immortal being who has chosen this human frame so that I might experience the manifest universe.

Let me sleep, for my soul is intoxicated with love and let me rest, for my spirit has had its bounty of days and nights; light the candles and burn the incense around my bower, and scatter leaves of jasmine and roses over my body; and read what the hand of Death has written upon my breast.

Let me rest in the arms of slumber, for I am weary; weave from the harp and lute a veil around my whispering heart. Sing of our love as you behold the dawn of hope in my eyes, for it's magic meaning is a soft couch upon which my heart reposes.

Dry your tears, my precious rosebud, and raise your head as the flowers raise their crowns to greet the dawn. Look at the bride of Death standing like a column of light between my couch and Eternity; hold your breath and listen with me to the beckoning rustle of her white wings.

Come close and bid me farewell; touch my eyes with smiling lips. Let the children grasp my hands with soft and rosy fingers; let the aged place their hands upon my head and bless me; venture close and see the shadow of God in my eyes, and hear the echo of His will racing with my breath.

The songs of the waves and the hymns of the streams are scattered, and the voices of the throngs reduced to silence; and I can hear naught but the music of Eternity in harmony with the spirit's desires. I am cloaked in full whiteness; I am in comfort; I am in peace. Close your eyes and you will see me with you forevermore.



Rampalé: THE SIXTH GATE—THRESHOLD OF ETERNITY

Téodoro Rampalé

Prelude by William Kern

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PRELUDE

It was already the hour which turns back the desire of the sailors, and melts their hearts; the hour they have said goodbye to their sweethearts and friends, and which pierces the heart of the mariner, if he hears, from afar, the bell which seems to mourn the dying day.

Who can separate their faith from their actions, or their belief from their occupations?

Who can spread their hours before them, saying, "This for my love and this for myself; this for my spirit and this other for my body?"

All your hours and days and years are but wings that beat through space and time from one self to another.

Whosoever wears their mortality as their best garment were better naked, for the wind and the sun will tear no holes in their skin.

And whosoever defines their conduct by ethics imprisons their song-bird in a cage, for the freest song comes not through bars and wires.

In reverie you cannot rise above your achievements nor fall lower than your failures. In adoration you cannot fly higher than your hopes nor humble yourself lower than your despair. And if you would know Peace, be not a solver of riddles.

Rather look about you and you shall see your love running and laughing with the children. Look into space; you shall see him hovering in the cloud, outstretching his arms in the lightning and descending in rain. You shall see him smiling in flowers, then rising and waving his hands in trees.

You would know the secret of death? But how shall you find it unless you seek it in the heart of life?

The owl whose night-bound eyes are blind unto the day cannot unveil the mystery of light. If you would indeed behold the spirit of death, open your heart wide unto the body of life, for life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one.

For I see in my thoughts, my sweet darling rosebud, that cold tongue, and two beautiful closed eyes shall remain full of sparks eternally after the boatman has carried me home.

In the depth of your hopes and desires lies your silent knowledge of the beyond; and like seeds dreaming beneath the snow your heart dreams of spring.

Trust the dreams, for in the dreams is hidden the gate to eternity.

What is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt into the sun? And what is it to cease breathing but to free the breath from its restless tides, that it may rise and expand and seek Joy unencumbered?

Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing, and when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb, and when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.

Now it was evening, and Eva said, "It is a glorious day for your spirit has come to me and spoken."

And he answered, "Was it I who spoke only? Did I not also listen?"

Then the Avatar descended the steps to the river Lethe and all his comrades and friends followed him.

And he reached his ship and stood upon the deck, and facing the friends again, he raised his voice and said: "People of Earth, the wind bids me leave you. Less hasty am I than the wind, yet I must go. We wanderers, ever seeking the lonelier way, begin no day where we have ended another day; and no sunrise finds us where sunset left us. Even while the earth sleeps we travel. We are the seeds of the tenacious plant, and it is in our ripeness and our fullness of heart that we are given to the wind and are scattered.

"My days among you were brief, and briefer still the words I have spoken. But should my voice fade in your ears, and my love vanish in your memory, then I will come

again, and with a richer heart and lips more yielding to the spirit will I speak. Yes, I shall return with the tide, and though death may hide me, and the greater silence enfold me, yet again will I seek your understanding.

“I go with the wind, friends of Earth, but not down into emptiness; and if this day is not a fulfillment of your needs and my love, then let it be a promise ‘til another day. Know, therefore, that from the great silence I shall return.

“The mist that drifts away at dawn, leaving but dew in the fields, shall rise and gather into a cloud and fall as rain, and not unlike the mist have I been. In the stillness of the night I have walked in your streets, and my spirit has entered your houses, and your heart-beats were in my heart, and your breath was upon my face, and I knew you all.

“Aye, I knew your joy and your pain, and in your sleep your dreams were my dreams, and oftentimes I was among you as a lake among the mountains. I mirrored the summits in you and the bending slopes, and even the passing flocks of your thoughts and your desires. And to my silence came the laughter of your childhood, and the longing of your youth. And when they reached my depth the streams and the rivers were singing still.

“But sweeter still than laughter and greater than all longing, you, my love, are boundless in me, and in beholding all these things of Earth I beheld you and loved you. For what distances can love reach that are not in that vast sphere? What visions, what expectations and what presumptions can outsoar that flight?

“And though this heavy-grounded ship awaits the tide upon these shores, yet, even like an ocean, we can neither hasten our tides nor wish them away. And like the seasons we are also, and though in our winter we deny our spring, yet spring, reposing within, smiles in her drowsiness and is not offended.

Think not I say these things in order that you may say the one to the other, “He praised us well. He saw but the good in us.”

“I only speak to you in words of that which you yourselves know in thought.

“I have found that which is greater than wisdom. It is a flame spirit in you ever gathering more of itself, while you, heedless of its expansion, bewail the withering of your days. It is life in quest of life in bodies that fear the grave.

“But, my darling rosebud, there are no graves on that distant shore. These mountains and plains are a cradle and a stepping-stone. Whenever you pass by the field where you have laid your ancestors look well thereupon, and you shall see yourselves and your children dancing hand in hand with your mother and father.

“Less than a promise have I given, perhaps, and yet more generous have you been to me. You have given me my deeper thirsting after life.

“Surely there is no greater gift to a man than that which turns all his aims into reality and all life into a fountain. And in this lies my honour and my reward,— That whenever I come to the fountain to drink I find the living water itself thirsty; And it drinks me

while I drink it.

“You are not enclosed within your bodies, nor confined to houses or fields. That which is you dwells above the mountain and roves with the wind. It is not a thing that crawls into the sun for warmth or digs holes into darkness for safety, but a thing free, a spirit that envelops the earth and moves in the ether.

“If these be vague words, then seek not to clear them. Vague and nebulous is the beginning of all things, but not their end, and I would have you remember me as a beginning. Life, and all that lives, is conceived in the mist and not in the crystal. And who knows but a crystal is mist in decay?

“This would I have you remember in remembering me:

“That which seems most gentle and bewildered in you is the strongest and most determined. Is it not your breath that has erected and hardened the structure of your bones? And is it not a dream which none of you remember having dreamt, that built your city and fashioned all there is in it? Could you but see the tides of that breath you would cease to see all else, and if you could hear the whispering of the dream you would hear no other sound.

“But you do not see, nor do you hear, and it is well. The veil that clouds your eyes shall be lifted by the hands that wove it, and the clay that fills your ears shall be pierced by those fingers that kneaded it.

“And one day you shall see. And one day you shall hear.

“Yet you shall not deplore having known blindness, nor regret having been deaf. For in that day you shall know the hidden purposes in all things, and you shall bless darkness as you would bless the light.”

After saying these things the Avatar looked about him, and he saw Charon, the pilot of his ship, standing by the helm and gazing now at the billowing sails and now at the distance.

And he said:

“Ah, patient, over patient, is the captain of my ship. The wind blows, and the sails are restless; even the rudder begs direction; yet quietly my captain awaits my silence. And these my mariners, who have heard the choir of the greater sea, they too have heard me patiently. Now they shall wait no longer. I am ready.

“The river has reached the sea, and once more the great mother holds her son against her breast. Fare you well, people of Earth. This day has ended. It is closing upon us even as the water-lily upon its own tomorrow. What was given us here we shall keep, and if it suffices not, then again must we come together and together stretch our hands unto the giver. Forget not that I shall come back to you.

“A little while, and my longing shall gather dust and foam for another body. A little while, my darling rosebud, a little while longer; a moment of rest upon the wind, and another woman shall bear me.

“Farewell to you and the youth I have spent with you. It was but yesterday we met in a dream. You have sung to me in my aloneness, and I of your longings have built a tower in the sky. But now our sleep has fled and our dream is over, and it is no longer dawn. The noontide is upon us and our half waking has turned to fuller day, and we must part. If in the twilight of memory we should meet once more, we shall speak again together and you shall sing to me a sweeter song. And if our hands should meet in another dream we shall build another tower in the sky.

“Kiss me now as I go so that when I awaken on that far shore, I will remember what lulled me so gently to sleep: the touch of your lips on mine.”

So saying he made a signal to the seamen, and straightaway they weighed anchor and cast the ship from its moorings, and they moved eastward. And a cry came from the comrades and friends as from a single heart, and it rose into the dusk and was carried out over the sea like a great chorus.

Only Eva was silent, gazing after the ship until it had vanished into the mist. And when all the people had gone, she stood alone upon the sea-wall, remembering in her heart his saying: “A little while, my darling rosebud, a little while longer; a moment of rest upon the wind, and another woman shall bear me.”

Preface to the Revised Edition

In working over this new edition I found only minor changes in its substance necessary; but I have added an appendix in which I have endeavored to explain more clearly the psychological foundations to which the disclosures contained in the book must be traced if they are to be accepted without risk of misunderstanding. I believe that the contents of the appendix will also serve to show many an opponent of anthroposophical spiritual science that his judgment is based upon a misconception of the nature of this spiritual science; that he does not see what it really is.

In preparing this new edition of *The Sixth Gate*, I have gone over every detail of the subject as I had presented it over ten years ago. The urge to make such a review is natural in the case of disclosures concerning soul experiences and paths such as are indicated in this book. There can be no portion of what is imparted which does not remain intimately a part of the one who communicates it, or which does not contain something that perpetually works upon his soul. And it is inevitable that this work of the soul should be joined by an endeavor to enhance the clarity and lucidity of the presentation as given years before. This engendered what I have endeavored to accomplish in this new edition. All the essential elements of the expositions, all the principal points, have remained as they were; yet important changes have been made. In many passages I have been able to increase the accuracy of characterization in detail, and this seemed to me important. If anyone wishes to apply what is imparted in this book to his own spiritual life, it is important that he should be able to contemplate the paths in question by means of a characterization as exact as possible. Misconceptions can arise in far greater measure in connection with the description of inner spiritual processes than with that of facts in the physical world. The mobility of the soul life, the danger of losing sight of how different it is from all life in the physical world—this and much else renders such misunderstandings possible. In preparing this new edition I have directed my attention to finding passages in which misconceptions might arise, and I have endeavored to forestall them.

At the time I wrote the essays that constitute this book, much had to be discussed

in a different way from today, because at that time I had to allude in a different manner to the substance of what had been published since then concerning facts of cognition of the spiritual worlds. In my Occult Science, in *The Spiritual Guidance of Mankind*, in *A Road to Self-Knowledge and the Threshold of the Spiritual World*, as well as in other writings, spiritual processes are described whose existence, to be sure, was already inevitably indicated in this book ten years ago, but in words differing from those that seem right today. In connection with a great deal not described in this book I had to explain at that time that it could be learned by oral communication. Much of what this referred to has since been published. But these allusions perhaps did not wholly exclude the possibility of erroneous ideas in the reader's mind. It might be possible, for instance, to imagine that something much more vital in the personal relations between the seeker for spiritual schooling and this or that teacher than is intended. I trust I have here succeeded, by presenting details in a certain way, in emphasizing more strongly that for one seeking spiritual schooling in accord with present spiritual conditions an absolutely direct relation to the objective spiritual world is of far greater importance than a relation to the personality of a teacher. The latter will gradually become merely the helper; he will assume the same position in spiritual schooling as a teacher occupies, in conformity with modern views, in any other field of knowledge. I believe I have sufficiently stressed the fact that the teacher's authority and the pupil's faith in him should play no greater part in spiritual schooling than in any other branch of knowledge or life. A great deal depends, it seems to me, upon an increasingly true estimate of this relation between the one who carries on spiritual research and those who develop an interest in the results of his research. Thus I believe I have improved the book wherever I was in a position, after ten years, to find what needs improving.

A second part is to be added to this first part, bringing further explanations of the frame of mind that can lead a man to the experience of the higher worlds.

The new edition of the book, the printing completed, lay before me when the great war now being experienced by mankind broke out. I must write these prefatory remarks while my soul is deeply moved by the destiny-laden event.

Herewith appear in book form my expositions originally published as single essays under the title *The Fourth Gate*. For the present, this volume offers the first part; one that is to follow will constitute the continuation. This work on a development of man that will enable him to grasp the supersensible worlds cannot be presented to the public in a new form without certain comments which I shall now make. The communications it contains concerning the development of the human soul are intended to fill various needs.

First of all, something is to be offered those people who feel drawn to the results of spiritual research, and who must raise the question: "Well, whence do these persons derive their knowledge who claim the ability to tell us something of the profound riddles of life?"—Spiritual science does this. Whoever wishes to observe the facts leading to such claims must rise to supersensible cognition. He must follow the path I have endeavored to describe in this book. On the other hand, it would be an error to imagine these disclosures of spiritual science to be valueless for one who lacks the inclination or the possibility to pursue this path himself. In order to establish the facts through research,

the ability to enter the supersensible worlds is indispensable; but once they have been discovered and communicated, even one who does not perceive them himself can be adequately convinced of their truth. A large proportion of them can be tested offhand, simply by applying ordinary common sense in a genuinely unprejudiced way. Only, one must not let this open-mindedness become confused by any of the pre-conceived ideas so common in human life. Someone can easily believe, for example, that some statement or other contradicts certain facts established by modern science. In reality, there is no such thing as a scientific fact that contradicts spiritual science; but there can easily seem to be contradictions unless scientific conclusions are consulted abundantly and without prejudice. The student will find that the more open-mindedly he compares spiritual science with positive scientific achievements, the more clearly is complete accord to be seen.

Another category of spiritual-scientific disclosures, it is true, will be found to elude purely mental judgment more or less; but the right relation to these also will be achieved without great difficulty by one who understands that not the mind alone but healthy feeling as well is qualified to determine what is true. And when this feeling does not permit itself to be warped by a liking or antipathy for some opinion or other, but really allows higher knowledge to act without prejudice, a corresponding sentient judgment results.

And there are many more ways of confirming this knowledge for those who cannot or do not wish to tread the path into the supersensible world. Such people can feel very clearly what value this knowledge has in life, even when it comes to them only through the communications of those engaged in spiritual research. Not everyone can immediately achieve spiritual vision; but the discoveries of those who have it can be health-giving life-nourishment for all. For everyone can apply them; and whoever does so will soon discover what life in every branch can be with their aid, and what it lacks without them. The results of supersensible knowledge, when properly employed in life, prove to be—not unpractical, but rather, practical in the highest sense.

One who does not himself intend to follow the path to higher knowledge, but is interested in the facts it reveals, can ask: How does the seer arrive at these facts? To such a one this book is intended to picture the path in such a way that even one not following it can nevertheless have confidence in the communications of the person who has done so. Realizing how the spiritual scientist works, he can approve, and say to himself: The impression made upon me by the description of this path to higher worlds makes clear why the facts reported seem reasonable. Thus this book is intended to help those who want their sense of truth and feeling for truth concerning the supersensible world strengthened and assured.

No less, however, does it aim to offer aid to those who themselves seek the way to supersensible knowledge. The truth of what is here set forth will best be verified by those who achieve its reality within themselves. Anyone with this intention will do well to keep reminding himself that in an exposition on the development of the soul, more is called for than becoming acquainted with the substance, which is frequently the aim in other expositions. It is necessary to familiarize oneself intimately with the presentation. One must postulate the following: no single matter is to be comprehended only by means

of what is said about the matter itself, but by means of much else that is disclosed concerning totally different matters. This will develop the conception that what is vital is to be found not in any single truth but in the harmony of all truths. This must be seriously considered by anyone intending to carry out the exercises. An exercise can be rightly understood and even rightly executed, and yet produce a wrong effect unless another be added to it—one that will resolve the one-sidedness of the first into a harmony of the soul. Whoever reads this book in an intimate way, so that the reading resembles an inner experience, will not merely familiarize himself with its content: one passage will evoke a certain feeling, another passage another feeling; and in that way he will learn how much importance should be seen in the one or the other in the development of his soul. He will also find out in what form he should try this or that exercise, what form best suits his particular individuality. When one has to do, as is the case here, with descriptions of processes that are to be experienced, it is necessary to refer again and again to the content; for it will become manifest that much can be satisfactorily assimilated only after trial, which in turn reveals certain finer points that at first are bound to be overlooked.

Even those readers who do not intend to take the way prescribed will find much in the book that can be of service to the inner life, such as maxims, suggestions that throw light on various puzzling problems, and so on.

And those who have had experiences in their lives that serve, to some extent, as an initiation through life may derive a certain satisfaction from finding clarified through co-ordination what had haunted them as separate problems—things they already knew, but perhaps without having been able to consolidate them in adequate conceptions.

THE SIXTH GATE—THRESHOLD OF ETERNITY

I

HOW IS KNOWLEDGE OF THE HIGHER WORLDS ATTAINED?

Conditions

THERE slumber in every human being faculties by means of which he can acquire for himself a knowledge of higher worlds. Mystics, Gnostics, Theosophists—all speak of a world of soul and spirit which for them is just as real as the world we see with our physical eyes and touch with our physical hands. At every moment the listener may say to himself: that, of which they speak, I too can learn, if I develop within myself certain powers which today still slumber within me. There remains only one question—how to set to work to develop such faculties. For this purpose, they only can give advice who already possess such powers. As long as the human race has existed there has always been a method of training, in the course of which individuals possessing these higher faculties gave instruction to others who were in search of them. Such a training is called occult (esoteric) training, and the instruction received therefrom is called occult (esoteric) teaching, or spiritual science. This designation naturally awakens misunderstanding. The one who hears it may very easily be misled into the belief that this training is the concern of a special, privileged class, withholding its knowledge arbitrarily from its fellow-creatures. He may even think that nothing of real importance lies behind such knowledge, for if it were a true knowledge—he is tempted to think—there would be no need of making a secret of it; it might be publicly imparted and its advantages made accessible to all. Those who have been initiated into the nature of this higher knowledge are not in the least surprised that the uninitiated should so think, for the secret of initiation can only be understood by those who have to a certain degree experienced this initiation into the higher knowledge of existence.

The question may be raised: how, then, under these circumstances, are the uninitiated to develop any human interest in this so-called esoteric knowledge? How and why are they to seek for something of whose nature they can form no idea? Such a question is based upon an entirely erroneous conception of the real nature of esoteric knowledge. There is, in truth, no difference between esoteric knowledge and all the rest of man's knowledge and proficiency. This esoteric knowledge is no more of a secret for the average human being than writing is a secret for those who have never learned it. And just as all can learn to write who choose the correct method, so, too, can all who seek the right way become esoteric students and even teachers. In one respect only do the conditions

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here differ from those that apply to external knowledge and proficiency. The possibility of acquiring the art of writing may be withheld from someone through poverty, or through the conditions of civilization into which he is born; but for the attainment of knowledge and proficiency in the higher worlds, there is no obstacle for those who earnestly seek them.

Many believe that they must seek, at one place or another, the masters of higher knowledge in order to receive enlightenment. Now in the first place, whoever strives earnestly after higher knowledge will shun no exertion and fear no obstacle in his search for an initiate who can lead him to the higher knowledge of the world. On the other hand, everyone may be certain that initiation will find him under all circumstances if he gives proof of an earnest and worthy endeavor to attain this knowledge. It is a natural law among all initiates to withhold from no man the knowledge that is due him but there is an equally natural law which lays down that no word of esoteric knowledge shall be imparted to anyone not qualified to receive it. And the more strictly he observes these laws, the more perfect is an initiate. The bond of union embracing all initiates is spiritual and not external, but the two laws here mentioned form, as it were, strong clasps by which the component parts of this bond are held together. You may live in intimate friendship with an initiate, and yet a gap severs you from his essential self, so long as you have not become an initiate yourself. You may enjoy in the fullest sense the heart, the love of an initiate, yet he will only confide his knowledge to you when you are ripe for it. You may flatter him; you may torture him; nothing can induce him to betray anything to you as long as you, at the present stage of your evolution, are not competent to receive it into your soul in the right way.

The methods by which a student is prepared for the reception of higher knowledge are minutely prescribed. The direction he is to take is traced with unfading, everlasting letters in the worlds of the spirit where the initiates guard the higher secrets. In ancient times, anterior to our history, the temples of the spirit were also outwardly visible; today, because our life has become so unspiritual, they are not to be found in the world visible to external sight; yet they are present spiritually everywhere, and all who seek may find them.

Only within his own soul can a man find the means to unseal the lips of an initiate. He must develop within himself certain faculties to a definite degree, and then the highest treasures of the spirit can become his own.

He must begin with a certain fundamental attitude of soul. In spiritual science this fundamental attitude is called the path of veneration, of devotion to truth and knowledge. Without this attitude no one can become a student. The disposition shown in their childhood by subsequent students of higher knowledge is well known to the experienced in these matters. There are children who look up with religious awe to those whom they venerate. For such people they have a respect which forbids them, even in the deepest recess of their heart, to harbor any thought of criticism or opposition. Such children grow up into young men and women who feel happy when they are able to look up to anything that fills them with veneration. From the ranks of such children are recruited many students of higher knowledge. Have you ever paused outside the door of some

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venerated person, and have you, on this your first visit, felt a religious awe as you pressed on the handle to enter the room which for you is a holy place? If so, a feeling has been manifested within you which may be the germ of your future adherence to the path of knowledge. It is a blessing for every human being in process of development to have such feelings upon which to build. Only it must not be thought that this disposition leads to submissiveness and slavery. What was once a childlike veneration for persons becomes, later, a veneration for truth and knowledge. Experience teaches that they can best hold their heads erect who have learnt to venerate where veneration is due; and veneration is always fitting when it flows from the depths of the heart.

If we do not develop within ourselves this deeply rooted feeling that there is something higher than ourselves, we shall never find the strength to evolve to something higher. The initiate has only acquired the strength to lift his head to the heights of knowledge by guiding his heart to the depths of veneration and devotion. The heights of the spirit can only be climbed by passing through the portals of humility. You can only acquire right knowledge when you have learnt to esteem it. Man has certainly the right to turn his eyes to the light, but he must first acquire this right. There are laws in the spiritual life, as in the physical life. Rub a glass rod with an appropriate material and it will become electric, that is, it will receive the power of attracting small bodies. This is in keeping with a law of nature. It is known to all who have learnt a little physics. Similarly, acquaintance with the first principles of spiritual science shows that every feeling of true devotion harbored in the soul develops a power which may, sooner or later, lead further on the path of knowledge.

The student who is gifted with this feeling, or who is fortunate enough to have had it inculcated in a suitable education, brings a great deal along with him when, later in life, he seeks admittance to higher knowledge. Failing such preparation, he will encounter difficulties at the very first step, unless he undertakes, by rigorous self-education, to create within himself this inner life of devotion. In our time it is especially important that full attention be paid to this point. Our civilization tends more toward critical judgment and condemnation than toward devotion and selfless veneration. Our children already criticize far more than they worship. But every criticism, every adverse judgment passed, disperses the powers of the soul for the attainment of higher knowledge in the same measure that all veneration and reverence develops them. In this we do not wish to say anything against our civilization. There is no question here of leveling criticism against it. To this critical faculty, this self-conscious human judgment, this "test all things and hold fast what is best," we owe the greatness of our civilization. Man could never have attained to the science, the industry, the commerce, the rights relationships of our time, had he not applied to all things the standard of his critical judgment. But what we have thereby gained in external culture we have had to pay for with a corresponding loss of higher knowledge of spiritual life. It must be emphasized that higher knowledge is not concerned with the veneration of persons but the veneration of truth and knowledge.

Now, the one thing that everyone must acknowledge is the difficulty for those involved in the external civilization of our time to advance to the knowledge of the higher worlds. They can only do so if they work energetically at themselves. At a time when the

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conditions of material life were simpler, the attainment of spiritual knowledge was also easier. Objects of veneration and worship stood out in clearer relief from the ordinary things of the world. In an epoch of criticism ideals are lowered; other feelings take the place of veneration, respect, adoration, and wonder. Our own age thrusts these feelings further and further into the background, so that they can only be conveyed to man through his every-day life in a very small degree. Whoever seeks higher knowledge must create it for himself. He must instill it into his soul. It cannot be done by study; it can only be done through life. Whoever, therefore, wishes to become a student of higher knowledge must assiduously cultivate this inner life of devotion. Everywhere in his environment and his experiences he must seek motives of admiration and homage. If I meet a man and blame him for his shortcomings, I rob myself of power to attain higher knowledge; but if I try to enter lovingly into his merits, I gather such power. The student must continually be intent upon following this advice. The spiritually experienced know how much they owe to the circumstance that in face of all things they ever again turn to the good, and withhold adverse judgment. But this must not remain an external rule of life; rather it must take possession of our innermost soul. Man has it in his power to perfect himself and, in time, completely to transform himself. But this transformation must take place in his innermost self, in his thought-life. It is not enough that I show respect only in my outward bearing; I must have this respect in my thoughts. The student must begin by absorbing this devotion into this thought-life. He must be wary of thoughts of disrespect, of adverse criticism, existing in his consciousness, and he must endeavor straightaway to cultivate thoughts of devotion.

Every moment that we set ourselves to discover in our consciousness whatever there remains in it of adverse, disparaging and critical judgement of the world and of life; every such moment brings us nearer to higher knowledge. And we rise rapidly when we fill our consciousness in such moments with thoughts evoking in us admiration, respect and veneration for the world and for life. It is well known to those experienced in these matters that in every such moment powers are awakened which otherwise remain dormant. In this way the spiritual eyes of man are opened. He begins to see things around him which he could not have seen before. He begins to understand that hitherto he had only seen a part of the world around him. A human being standing before him now presents a new and different aspect. Of course, this rule of life alone will not yet enable him to see, for instance, what is described as the human aura, because for this still higher training is necessary. But he can rise to this higher training if he has previously undergone a rigorous training in devotion. (In the last chapter of his book *Theosophy*, the author describes fully the Path of Knowledge; here it is intended to give some practical details.)

Noiseless and unnoticed by the outer world is the treading of the Path of Knowledge. No change need be noticed in the student. He performs his duties as hitherto; he attends to his business as before. The transformation goes on only in the inner part of the soul hidden from outward sight. At first his entire inner life is flooded by this basic feeling of devotion for everything which is truly venerable. His entire soul-life finds in this fundamental feeling its pivot. Just as the sun's rays vivify everything living, so does reverence in the student vivify all feelings of the soul.

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It is not easy, at first, to believe that feelings like reverence and respect have anything to do with cognition. This is due to the fact that we are inclined to set cognition aside as a faculty by itself—one that stands in no relation to what otherwise occurs in the soul. In so thinking we do not bear in mind that it is the soul which exercises the faculty of cognition; and feelings are for the soul what food is for the body. If we give the body stones in place of bread, its activity will cease. It is the same with the soul. Veneration, homage, devotion are like nutriment making it healthy and strong, especially strong for the activity of cognition. Disrespect, antipathy, underestimation of what deserves recognition, all exert a paralyzing and withering effect on this faculty of cognition. For the spiritually experienced this fact is visible in the aura. A soul which harbors feelings of reverence and devotion produces a change in its aura. Certain spiritual colorings, as they may be called, yellow-red and brown-red in tone, vanish and are replaced by blue-red tints. Thereby the cognitional faculty is ripened; it receives intelligence of facts in its environment of which it had hitherto no idea. Reverence awakens in the soul a sympathetic power through which we attract qualities in the beings around us, which would otherwise remain concealed.

The power obtained through devotion can be rendered still more effective when the life of feeling is enriched by yet another quality. This consists in giving oneself up less and less to impressions of the outer world, and to develop instead a vivid inner life. A person who darts from one impression of the outer world to another, who constantly seeks distraction, cannot find the way to higher knowledge. The student must not blunt himself to the outer world, but while lending himself to its impressions, he should be directed by his rich inner life. When passing through a beautiful mountain district, the traveler with depth of soul and wealth of feeling has different experiences from one who is poor in feeling. Only what we experience within ourselves unlocks for us the beauties of the outer world. One person sails across the ocean, and only a few inward experiences pass through his soul; another will hear the eternal language of the cosmic spirit; for him are unveiled the mysterious riddles of existence. We must learn to remain in touch with our own feelings and ideas if we wish to develop any intimate relationship with the outer world. The outer world with all its phenomena is filled with splendor, but we must have experienced the divine within ourselves before we can hope to discover it in our environment.

The student is told to set apart moments in his daily life in which to withdraw into himself, quietly and alone. He is not to occupy himself at such moments with the affairs of his own ego. This would result in the contrary of what is intended. He should rather let his experiences and the messages from the outer world re-echo within his own completely silent self. At such silent moments every flower, every animal, every action will unveil to him secrets undreamt of. And thus he will prepare himself to receive quite new impressions of the outer world through quite different eyes. The desire to enjoy impression after impression merely blunts the faculty of cognition; the latter, however, is nurtured and cultivated if the enjoyment once experienced is allowed to reveal its message. Thus the student must accustom himself not merely to let the enjoyment reverberate, as it were, but rather to renounce any further enjoyment, and work upon the past experience. The peril here is very great. Instead of working inwardly, it is very easy to

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fall into the opposite habit of trying to exploit the enjoyment. Let no one underestimate the fact that immense sources of error here confront the student. He must pass through a host of tempters of his soul. They would all harden his ego and imprison it within itself. He should rather open it wide to all the world. It is necessary that he should seek enjoyment, for only through enjoyment can the outer world reach him. If he blunts himself to enjoyment he is like a plant which cannot any longer draw nourishment from its environment. Yet if he stops short at the enjoyment he shuts himself up within himself. He will only be something to himself and nothing to the world. However much he may live within himself, however intensely he may cultivate his ego—the world will reject him. To the world he is dead. The student of higher knowledge considers enjoyment only as a means of ennobling himself for the world. Enjoyment is to him like a scout informing him about the world; but once instructed by enjoyment, he passes on to work. He does not learn in order to accumulate learning as his own treasure, but in order that he may devote his learning to the service of the world.

In all spiritual science there is a fundamental principle which cannot be transgressed without sacrificing success, and it should be impressed on the student in every form of esoteric training. It runs as follows: All knowledge pursued merely for the enrichment of personal learning and the accumulation of personal treasure leads you away from the path; but all knowledge pursued for growth to ripeness within the process of human ennoblement and cosmic development brings you a step forward. This law must be strictly observed, and no student is genuine until he has adopted it as a guide for his whole life. This truth can be expressed in the following short sentence: Every idea which does not become your ideal slays a force in your soul; every idea which becomes your ideal creates within you life-forces.

Inner Tranquility

At the very beginning of his course, the student is directed to the path of veneration and the development of the inner life. Spiritual science now also gives him practical rules by observing which he may tread that path and develop that inner life. These practical rules have no arbitrary origin. They rest upon ancient experience and ancient wisdom, and are given out in the same manner, wheresoever the ways to higher knowledge are indicated. All true teachers of the spiritual life are in agreement as to the substance of these rules, even though they do not always clothe them in the same words. This difference, which is of a minor character and is more apparent than real, is due to circumstances which need not be dwelt upon here.

No teacher of the spiritual life wishes to establish a mastery over other persons by means of such rules. He would not tamper with anyone's independence. Indeed, none respect and cherish human independence more than the spiritually experienced. It was stated in the preceding pages that the bond of union embracing all initiates is spiritual, and that two laws form, as it were, clasps by which the component parts of this bond are held together. Whenever the initiate leaves his enclosed spiritual sphere and steps forth before the world, he must immediately take a third law into account. It is this: Adapt each one of your actions, and frame each one of your words in such a way that you infringe upon no one's free-will.

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The recognition that all true teachers of the spiritual life are permeated through and through with this principle will convince all who follow the practical rules proffered to them that they need sacrifice none of their independence.

One of the first of these rules can be expressed somewhat in the following words of our language: Provide for yourself moments of inner tranquility, and in these moments learn to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential. It is said advisedly: "expressed in the words of our language." Originally all rules and teachings of spiritual science were expressed in a symbolical sign-language, some understanding of which must be acquired before its whole meaning and scope can be realized. This understanding is dependent on the first steps toward higher knowledge, and these steps result from the exact observation of such rules as are here given. For all who earnestly will, the path stands open to tread.

Simple, in truth, is the above rule concerning moments of inner tranquility; equally simple is its observation. But it only achieves its purpose when it is observed in as earnest and strict a manner as it is, in itself, simple. How this rule is to be observed will, therefore, be explained without digression.

The student must set aside a small part of his daily life in which to concern himself with something quite different from the objects of his daily occupation. The way, also, in which he occupies himself at such a time must differ entirely from the way in which he performs the rest of his daily duties. But this does not mean that what he does in the time thus set apart has no connection with his daily work. On the contrary, he will soon find that just these secluded moments, when sought in the right way, give him full power to perform his daily task. Nor must it be supposed that the observance of this rule will really encroach upon the time needed for the performance of his duties. Should anyone really have no more time at his disposal, five minutes a day will suffice. It all depends on the manner in which these five minutes are spent.

During these periods the student should wrest himself entirely free from his work-a-day life. His thoughts and feelings should take on a different coloring. His joys and sorrows, his cares, experiences and actions must pass in review before his soul; and he must adopt such a position that he may regard all his sundry experiences from a higher point of view.

We need only bear in mind how, in ordinary life, we regard the experiences and actions of others quite differently from our own. This cannot be otherwise, for we are interwoven with our own actions and experiences, whereas those of others we only contemplate. Our aim in these moments of seclusion must be so to contemplate and judge our own actions and experiences as though they applied not to ourselves but to some other person. Suppose, for example, a heavy misfortune befalls us. How different would be our attitude toward a similar misfortune had it befallen our neighbor. This attitude cannot be blamed as unjustifiable; it is part of human nature, and applies equally to exceptional circumstances and to the daily affairs of life. The student must seek the power of confronting himself, at certain times, as a stranger. He must stand before himself with the inner tranquility of a judge. When this is attained, our own experiences present them-

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selves in a new light. As long as we are interwoven with them and stand, as it were, within them, we cling to the non-essential just as much as to the essential. If we attain the calm inner survey, the essential is severed from the non-essential. Sorrow and joy, every thought, every resolve, appear different when we confront ourselves in this way. It is as though we had spent the whole day in a place where we beheld the smallest objects at the same close range as the largest, and in the evening climbed a neighboring hill and surveyed the whole scene at a glance. Then the various parts appear related to each other in different proportions from those they bore when seen from within. This exercise will not and need not succeed with present occurrences of destiny, but it should be attempted by the student in connection with the events of destiny already experienced in the past. The value of such inner tranquil self-contemplation depends far less on what is actually contemplated than on our finding within ourselves the power which such inner tranquility develops.

For every human being bears a higher man within himself besides what we may call the work-a-day man. This higher man remains hidden until he is awakened. And each human being can himself alone awaken this higher being within himself. As long as this higher being is not awakened, the higher faculties slumbering in every human being, and leading to supersensible knowledge, will remain concealed. The student must resolve to persevere in the strict and earnest observation of the rule here given, so long as he does not feel within himself the fruits of this inner tranquility. To all who thus persevere the day will come when spiritual light will envelop them, and a new world will be revealed to an organ of sight of whose presence within them they were never aware.

And no change need take place in the outward life of the student in consequence of this new rule. He performs his duties and, at first, feels the same joys, sorrows, and experiences as before. In no way can it estrange him from life; he can rather devote himself the more thoroughly to this life for the remainder of the day, having gained a higher life in the moments set apart. Little by little this higher life will make its influence felt on his ordinary life. The tranquility of the moments set apart will also affect everyday existence. In his whole being he will grow calmer; he will attain firm assurance in all his actions, and cease to be put out of countenance by all manner of incidents. By thus advancing he will gradually become more and more his own guide, and allow himself less and less to be led by circumstances and external influences. He will soon discover how great a source of strength is available to him in these moments thus set apart. He will begin no longer to get angry at things which formerly annoyed him; countless things he formerly feared cease to alarm him. He acquires a new outlook on life. Formerly he may have approached some occupation in a fainthearted way. He would say: "Oh, I lack the power to do this as well as I could wish." Now this thought does not occur to him, but rather a quite different thought. Henceforth he says to himself: "I will summon all my strength to do my work as well as I possibly can." And he suppresses the thought which makes him faint-hearted; for he knows that this very thought might be the cause of a worse performance on his part, and that in any case it cannot contribute to the improvement of his work. And thus thought after thought, each fraught with advantage to his whole life, flows into the student's outlook. They take the place of those that had a hampering, weakening effect. He begins to steer his own ship on a secure course through

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the waves of life, whereas it was formerly battered to and fro by these waves.

This calm and serenity react on the whole being. They assist the growth of the inner man, and, with the inner man, those faculties also grow which lead to higher knowledge. For it is by his progress in this direction that the student gradually reaches the point where he himself determines the manner in which the impressions of the outer world shall affect him. Thus he may hear a word spoken with the object of wounding or vexing him. Formerly it would indeed have wounded or vexed him, but now that he treads the path to higher knowledge, he is able—before the word has found its way to his inner self—to take from it the sting which gives it the power to wound or vex. Take another example. We easily become impatient when we are kept waiting, but—if we tread the path to higher knowledge—we so steep ourselves in our moments of calm with the feeling of the uselessness of impatience that henceforth, on every occasion of impatience, this feeling is immediately present within us. The impatience that was about to make itself felt vanishes, and an interval which would otherwise have been wasted in expressions of impatience will be filled by useful observations, which can be made while waiting.

Now, the scope and significance of these facts must be realized. We must bear in mind that the higher man within us is in constant development. But only the state of calm and serenity here described renders an orderly development possible. The waves of outward life constrain the inner man from all sides if, instead of mastering this outward life, it masters him. Such a man is like a plant which tries to expand in a cleft in the rock and is stunted in growth until new space is given it. No outward forces can supply space to the inner man. It can only be supplied by the inner calm which man himself gives to his soul. Outward circumstances can only alter the course of his outward life; they can never awaken the inner spiritual man. The student must himself give birth to a new and higher man within himself.

This higher man now becomes the inner ruler who directs the circumstances of the outer man with sure guidance. As long as the outer man has the upper hand and control, this inner man is his slave and therefore cannot unfold his powers. If it depends on something other than myself whether I should get angry or not, I am not master of myself, or, to put it better, I have not yet found the ruler within myself. I must develop the faculty of letting the impressions of the outer world approach me only in the way in which I myself determine; then only do I become in the real sense a student. And only in as far as the student earnestly seeks this power can he reach the goal. It is of no importance how far anyone can go in a given time; the point is that he should earnestly seek. Many have striven for years without noticing any appreciable progress; but many of those who did not despair, but remained unshaken, have then quite suddenly achieved the inner victory.

No doubt a great effort is required in many stations of life to provide these moments of inner calm; but the greater the effort needed, the more important is the achievement. In spiritual science everything depends upon energy, inward truthfulness, and uncompromising sincerity with which we confront our own selves, with all our deeds and actions, as a complete stranger.

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But only one side of the student's inner activity is characterized by this birth of his own higher being. Something else is needed in addition. Even if he confronts himself as a stranger it is only himself that he contemplates; he looks on those experiences and actions with which he is connected through his particular station of life. He must now disengage himself from it and rise beyond to a purely human level, which no longer has anything to do with his own special situation. He must pass on to the contemplation of those things which would concern him as a human being, even if he lived under quite different circumstances and in quite a different situation. In this way something begins to live within him which ranges above the purely personal. His gaze is directed to worlds higher than those with which every-day life connects him. And thus he begins to feel and realize, as an inner experience, that he belongs to those higher worlds. These are worlds concerning which his senses and his daily occupation can tell him nothing. Thus he now shifts the central point of his being to the inner part of his nature. He listens to the voices within him which speak to him in his moments of tranquility; he cultivates an intercourse with the spiritual world. He is removed from the every-day world. Its noise is silenced. All around him there is silence. He puts away everything that reminds him of such impressions from without.

Calm inward contemplation and converse with the purely spiritual world fill his soul.—Such tranquil contemplation must become a natural necessity in the life of the student. He is now plunged in a world of thought. He must develop a living feeling for this silent thought-activity. He must learn to love what the spirit pours into him. He will soon cease to feel that this thought-world is less real than the every-day things which surround him. He begins to deal with his thoughts as with things in space, and the moment approaches when he begins to feel that which reveals itself in the silent inward thought-work to be much higher, much more real, than the things in space. He discovers that something living expresses itself in this thought-world. He sees that his thoughts do not merely harbor shadow-pictures, but that through them hidden beings speak to him. Out of the silence, speech becomes audible to him. Formerly sound only reached him through his ear; now it resounds through his soul. An inner language, an inner word is revealed to him. This moment, when first experienced, is one of greatest rapture for the student. An inner light is shed over the whole external world, and a second life begins for him. Through his being there pours a divine stream from a world of divine rapture.

This life of the soul in thought, which gradually widens into a life in spiritual being, is called by Gnosis, and by Spiritual Science, Meditation (contemplative reflection). This meditation is the means to supersensible knowledge. But the student in such moments must not merely indulge in feelings; he must not have indefinite sensations in his soul. That would only hinder him from reaching true spiritual knowledge. His thoughts must be clear, sharp and definite, and he will be helped in this if he does not cling blindly to the thoughts that rise within him. Rather must he permeate himself with the lofty thoughts by which men already advanced and possessed of the spirit were inspired at such moments. He should start with the writings which themselves had their origin in just such revelation during meditation. In the mystic, gnostic and spiritual scientific literature of today the student will find such writings, and in them the material for his meditation. The seekers of the spirit have themselves set down in such writings the thoughts of the divine

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science which the Spirit has directed his messengers to proclaim to the world.

Through such meditation a complete transformation takes place in the student. He begins to form quite new conceptions of reality. All things acquire a fresh value for him. It cannot be repeated too often that this transformation does not alienate him from the world. He will in no way be estranged from his daily tasks and duties, for he comes to realize that the most insignificant action he has to accomplish, the most insignificant experience which offers itself to him, stands in connection with cosmic beings and cosmic events. When once this connection is revealed to him in his moments of contemplation, he comes to his daily activities with a new, fuller power. For now he knows that his labor and his suffering are given and endured for the sake of a great, spiritual, cosmic whole. Not weariness, but strength to live springs from meditation.

With firm step the student passes through life. No matter what it may bring him, he goes forward erect. In the past he knew not why he labored and suffered, but now he knows. It is obvious that such meditation leads more surely to the goal if conducted under the direction of experienced persons who know of themselves how everything may best be done; and their advice and guidance should be sought. Truly, no one loses his freedom thereby. What would otherwise be mere uncertain groping in the dark becomes under this direction purposeful work. All who apply to those possessing knowledge and experience in these matters will never apply in vain, only they must realize that what they seek is the advice of a friend, not the domination of a would-be ruler. It will always be found that they who really know are the most modest of men, and that nothing is further from their nature than what is called the lust for power.

When, by means of meditation, a man rises to union with the spirit, he brings to life the eternal in him, which is limited by neither birth nor death. The existence of this eternal being can only be doubted by those who have not themselves experienced it. Thus meditation is the way which also leads man to the knowledge, to the contemplation of his eternal, indestructible, essential being; and it is only through meditation that man can attain to such knowledge. Gnosis and Spiritual Science tell of the eternal nature of this being and of its reincarnation. The question is often asked: Why does a man know nothing of his experiences beyond the borders of life and death? Not thus should we ask, but rather: How can we attain such knowledge? In right meditation the path is opened. This alone can revive the memory of experiences beyond the border of life and death. Everyone can attain this knowledge; in each one of us lies the faculty of recognizing and contemplating for ourselves what genuine Mysticism, Spiritual Science, Anthroposophy, and Gnosis teach. Only the right means must be chosen. Only a being with ears and eyes can apprehend sounds and colors; nor can the eye perceive if the light which makes things visible is wanting. Spiritual Science gives the means of developing the spiritual ears and eyes, and of kindling the spiritual light; and this method of spiritual training: (1) Preparation; this develops the spiritual senses. (2) Enlightenment; this kindles the spiritual light. (3) Initiation; this establishes intercourse with the higher spiritual beings.

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II

THE STAGES OF INITIATION

THE information given in the following chapters constitutes steps in an esoteric training, the name and character of which will be understood by all who apply this information in the right way. It refers to the three stages through which the training of the spiritual life leads to a certain degree of initiation. But only so much will here be explained as can be publicly imparted. These are merely indications extracted from a still deeper and more intimate doctrine. In esoteric training itself a quite definite course of instruction is followed. Certain exercises enable the soul to attain to a conscious intercourse with the spiritual world. These exercises bear about the same relation to what will be imparted in the following pages, as the instruction given in a higher strictly disciplined school bears to the incidental training. But impatient dabbling, devoid of earnest perseverance, can lead to nothing at all. The study of Spiritual Science can only be successful if the student retain what has already been indicated in the preceding chapter, and on the basis of this proceed further.

The three stages which the above-mentioned tradition specifies, are as follows: (1) preparation; (2) enlightenment; (3) initiation. It is not altogether necessary that the first of these three stages should be completed before the second can be begun, nor that the second, in turn, be completed before the third be started. In certain respects it is possible to partake of enlightenment, and even of initiation, and in other respects still be in the preparatory stage. Yet it will be necessary to spend a certain time in the stage of preparation before any enlightenment can begin; and, at least in some respects, enlightenment must be completed before it is even possible to enter upon the stage of initiation. But in describing them it is necessary, for the sake of clarity, that the three stages be made to follow in order.

Preparation

Preparation consists in a strict and definite cultivation of the life of thought and feeling, through which the psycho-spiritual body becomes equipped with higher senses and organs of activity in the same way that natural forces have fitted the physical body with organs built out of indeterminate living matter.

To begin with, the attention of the soul is directed to certain events in the world

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that surrounds us. Such events are, on the one hand, life that is budding, growing, and flourishing, and on the other hand, all phenomena connected with fading, decaying, and withering. The student can observe these events simultaneously, wherever he turns his eyes and on every occasion they naturally evoke in him feelings and thoughts; but in ordinary circumstances he does not devote himself sufficiently to them. He hurries on too quickly from impression to impression. It is necessary, therefore, that he should fix his attention intently and consciously upon these phenomena. Wherever he observes a definite kind of blooming and flourishing, he must banish everything else from his soul, and entirely surrender himself, for a short time, to this one impression. He will soon convince himself that a feeling which heretofore in a similar case, would merely have flitted through his soul, now swells out and assumes a powerful and energetic form. He must now allow this feeling to reverberate quietly within himself while keeping inwardly quite still. He must cut himself off from the outer world, and simply and solely follow what his soul tells him of this blossoming and flourishing.

Yet it must not be thought that much progress can be made if the senses are blunted to the world. First look at the things as keenly and as intently as you possibly can; then only let the feeling which expands to life, and the thought which arises in the soul, take possession of you. The point is that the attention should be directed with perfect inner balance upon both phenomena. If the necessary tranquility be attained and you surrender yourself to the feeling which expands to life in the soul, then, in due time, the following experience will ensue. Thoughts and feelings of a new kind and unknown before will be noticed uprising in the soul. Indeed, the more often the attention be fixed alternately upon something growing, blossoming and flourishing, and upon something else that is fading and decaying, the more vivid will these feelings become. And just as the eyes and ears of the physical body are built by natural forces out of living matter, so will the organs of clairvoyance build themselves out of the feelings and thoughts thus evoked. A quite definite form of feeling is connected with growth and expansion, and another equally definite with all that is fading and decaying. But this is only the case if the effort be made to cultivate these feelings in the way indicated. It is possible to describe approximately what these feelings are like. A full conception of them is within the reach of all who undergo these inner experiences.

If the attention be frequently fixed on the phenomena of growing, blooming and flourishing, a feeling remotely allied to the sensation of a sunrise will ensue, while the phenomena of fading and decaying will produce an experience comparable, in the same way, to the slow rising of the moon on the horizon. Both these feelings are forces which, when duly cultivated and developed to ever increasing intensity, lead to the most significant spiritual results. A new world is opened to the student if he systematically and deliberately surrenders himself to such feelings. The soul-world, the so-called astral plane, begins to dawn upon him. Growth and decay are no longer facts which make indefinite impressions on him as of old, but rather they form themselves into spiritual lines and figures of which he had previously suspected nothing. And these lines and figures have, for the different phenomena, different forms. A blooming flower, an animal in the process of growth, a tree that is decaying, evoke in his soul different lines. The soul world (astral plane) broadens out slowly before him. These lines and figures are in

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no sense arbitrary. Two students who have reached the corresponding stage of development will always see the same lines and figures under the same conditions. Just as a round table will be seen as round by two normal persons, and not as round by one and square by the other, so too, at the sight of a flower, the same spiritual figure is presented to the soul. And just as the forms of animals and plants are described in ordinary natural history, so too, the spiritual scientist describes or draws the spiritual forms of the process of growth and decay, according to species and kind.

If the student has progressed so far that he can perceive the spiritual forms of those phenomena which are physically visible to his external sight, he is then not far from the stage where he will behold things which have no physical existence, and which therefore remain entirely hidden (occult) from those who have not received suitable instruction and training.

It should be emphasized that the student must never lose himself in speculations on the meaning of one thing or another. Such intellectualizing will only draw him away from the right road. He should look out on the world with keen, healthy senses and quickened power of observation, and then give himself up to the feeling that arises within him. He should not try to make out, through intellectual speculation, the meaning of things, but rather allow the things to disclose themselves. It should be remarked that artistic feeling, when coupled with a quiet introspective nature, forms the best preliminary condition for the development of spiritual faculties. This feeling pierces through the superficial aspect of things, and in so doing touches their secrets.

A further point of importance is what spiritual science calls orientation in the higher worlds. This is attained when the student is permeated, through and through, with the conscious realization that feelings and thoughts are just as much veritable realities as are tables and chairs in the world of the physical senses. In the soul and thought world, feelings and thoughts react upon each other just as do physical objects in the physical world. As long as the student is not vividly permeated with this consciousness, he will not believe that a wrong thought in his mind may have as devastating an effect upon other thoughts that spread life in the thought world as the effect wrought by a bullet fired at random upon the physical objects it hits. He will perhaps never allow himself to perform a physically visible action which he considers to be wrong, though he will not shrink from harboring wrong thoughts and feelings, for these appear harmless to the rest of the world. There can be no progress, however, on the path to higher knowledge unless we guard our thoughts and feelings in just the same way we guard our steps in the physical world. If we see a wall before us, we do not attempt to dash right through it, but turn aside. In other words, we guide ourselves by the laws of the physical world. There are such laws, too, for the soul and thought world, only they cannot impose themselves on us from without. They must flow out of the life of the soul itself. This can be attained if we forbid ourselves to harbor wrong thoughts and feelings.

All arbitrary flitting to and fro in thought, all accidental ebbing and flowing of emotion must be forbidden in the same way. In so doing we do not become deficient in feeling. On the contrary, if we regulate our inner life in this way, we shall soon find ourselves becoming rich in feelings and creative with genuine imagination. In the place of

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petty emotionalism and capricious flights of thought, there appear significant emotions and thoughts that are fruitful. Feelings and thoughts of this kind lead the student to orientation in the spiritual world. He gains a right position in relation to the things of the spiritual world; a distinct and definite result comes into effect in his favor.

Just as he, as a physical man, finds his way among physical things, so, too, his path now leads him between growth and decay, which he has already come to know in the way described above. On the one hand, he follows all processes of growing and flourishing and, on the other, of withering and decaying in a way that is necessary for his own and the world's advancement.

The student has also to bestow a further care on the world of sound. He must discriminate between sounds that are produced by the so-called inert (lifeless) bodies, for instance, a bell, or a musical instrument, or a falling mass, and those which proceed from a living creature (an animal or a human being.) When a bell is struck, we hear the sound and connect a pleasant feeling with it; but when we hear the cry of an animal, we can, besides our own feeling, detect through it the manifestation of an inward experience of the animal, whether of pleasure or pain. It is with the latter kind of sound that the student sets to work. He must concentrate his whole attention on the fact that the sound tells him of something that lies outside his own soul. He must immerse himself in this foreign thing. He must closely unite his own feeling with the pleasure or pain of which the sound tells him. He must get beyond the point of caring whether, for him, the sound is pleasant or unpleasant, agreeable or disagreeable, and his soul must be filled with whatever is occurring in the being from which the sound proceeds. Through such exercises, if systematically and deliberately performed, the student will develop within himself the faculty of intermingling, as it were, with the being from which the sound proceeds. A person sensitive to music will find it easier than one who is unmusical to cultivate his inner life in this way; but no one should suppose that a mere sense for music can take the place of this inner activity. The student must learn to feel in this way in the face of the whole of nature. This implants a new faculty in his world of thought and feeling. Through her resounding tones, the whole of nature begins to whisper her secrets to the student. What was hitherto merely incomprehensible noise to his soul becomes by this means a coherent language of nature. And whereas hitherto he only heard sound from the so-called inanimate objects, he now is aware of a new language of the soul. Should he advance further in this inner culture, he will soon learn that he can hear what hitherto he did not even surmise. He begins to hear with the soul.

To this, one thing more must be added before the highest point in this region can be attained. Of very great importance for the development of the student is the way in which he listens to others when they speak. He must accustom himself to do this in such a way that, while listening, his inner self is absolutely silent. If someone expresses an opinion and another listens, assent or dissent will, generally speaking, stir in the inner self of the listener. Many people in such cases feel themselves impelled to an expression of their assent, or more especially, of their dissent. In the student, all such assent or dissent must be silenced. It is not imperative that he should suddenly alter his way of living by trying to attain at all times to this complete inner silence. He will have to begin by

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doing so in special cases, deliberately selected by himself. Then quite slowly and by degrees, this new way of listening will creep into his habits, as of itself. In spiritual research this is systematically practiced. The student feels it his duty to listen, by way of practice, at certain times to the most contradictory views and, at the same time, bring entirely to silence all assent, and more especially, all adverse criticism. The point is that in so doing, not only all purely intellectual judgment be silenced, but also all feelings of displeasure, denial, or even assent. The student must at all times be particularly watchful lest such feelings, even when not on the surface, should still lurk in the innermost recess of the soul. He must listen, for example, to the statements of people who are, in some respects, far beneath him, and yet while doing so suppress every feeling of greater knowledge or superiority. It is useful for everyone to listen in this way to children, for even the wisest can learn incalculably much from children. The student can thus train himself to listen to the words of others quite selflessly, completely shutting down his own person and his opinions and way of feeling.

When he practices listening without criticism, even when a completely contradictory opinion is advanced, when the most hopeless mistake is committed before him, he then learns, little by little, to blend himself with the being of another and become identified with it. Then he hears through the words into the soul of the other. Through continued exercise of this kind, sound becomes the right medium for the perception of soul and spirit. Of course it implies the very strictest self-discipline, but the latter leads to a high goal. When these exercises are practiced in connection with the other already given, dealing with the sounds of nature, the soul develops a new sense of hearing. She is now able to perceive manifestations from the spiritual world which do not find their expression in sounds perceptible to the physical ear. The perception of the "inner word" awakens. Gradually truths reveal themselves to the student from the spiritual world. He hears speech uttered to him in a spiritual way. Only to those who, by selfless listening, train themselves to be really receptive from within, in stillness, unmoved by personal opinion or feeling only to such can the higher beings speak of whom spiritual science tells. As long as one hurls any personal opinion or feeling against the speaker to whom one must listen, the beings of the spiritual world remain silent.

All higher truths are attained through such inwardly instilled speech, and what we hear from the lips of a true spiritual teacher has been experienced by him in this manner. But this does not mean that it is unimportant for us to acquaint ourselves with the writings of spiritual science before we can ourselves hear such inwardly instilled speech. On the contrary, the reading of such writings and the listening to the teachings of spiritual science are themselves means of attaining personal knowledge. Every sentence of spiritual science we hear is of a nature to direct the mind to the point which must be reached before the soul can experience real progress. To the practice of all that has here been indicated must be added the ardent study of what the spiritual researchers impart to the world. In all esoteric training such study belongs to the preparatory period, and all other methods will prove ineffective if due receptivity for the teachings of the spiritual researcher is lacking. For since these instructions are culled from the living inner word, from the living inwardly instilled speech, they are themselves gifted with spiritual life. They are not mere words; they are living powers. And while you follow the

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words of one who knows, while you read a book that springs from real inner experience, powers are at work in your soul which make you clairvoyant, just as natural forces have created out of living matter your eyes and your ears.

Enlightenment

Enlightenment proceeds from very simple processes. Here, too, it is a matter of developing certain feelings and thoughts which slumber in every human being and must be awakened. It is only when these simple processes are carried out with unfailing patience, continuously and conscientiously, that they can lead to the perception of the inner light-forms. The first step is taken by observing different natural objects in a particular way; for instance, a transparent and beautifully formed stone (a crystal), a plant, and an animal. The student should endeavor, at first, to direct his whole attention to a comparison of the stone with the animal in the following manner. The thoughts here mentioned should pass through his soul accompanied by vivid feelings, and no other thought, no other feeling, must mingle with them and disturb what should be an intensely attentive observation. The student says to himself: "The stone has a form; the animal also has a form. The stone remains motionless in its place. The animal changes its place. It is instinct (desire) which causes the animal to change its place. Instincts, too, are served by the form of the animal. Its organs and limbs are fashioned in accordance with these instincts. The form of the stone is not fashioned in accordance with desires, but in accordance with desireless force." (The fact here mentioned, in its bearing on the contemplation of crystals, is in many ways distorted by those who have only heard of it in an outward, exoteric manner, and in this way such practices as crystal-gazing have their origin. Such manipulations are based on a misunderstanding. They have been described in many books, but they never form the subject of genuine esoteric teaching.)

By sinking deeply into such thoughts, and while doing so, observing the stone and the animal with rapt attention, there arise in the soul two quite separate kinds of feelings. From the stone there flows into the soul the one kind of feeling, and from the animal the other kind. The attempt will probably not succeed at first, but little by little, with genuine and patient practice, these feelings ensue. Only, this exercise must be practiced over and over again. At first the feelings are only present as long as the observation lasts. Later on they continue, and then they grow to something which remains living in the soul. The student has then but to reflect, and both feelings will always arise, even without the contemplation of an external object. Out of these feelings and the thoughts that are bound up with them, the organs of clairvoyance are formed. If the plant should then be included in this observation, it will be noticed that the feeling flowing from it lies between the feelings derived from the stone and the animal, in both quality and degree. The organs thus formed are spiritual eyes. The student gradually learns, by their means, to see something like soul and spirit colors. The spiritual world with its lines and figures remains dark as long as he has only attained what has been described as preparation; through enlightenment this world becomes light. Here it must also be noted that the words "dark" and "light," as well as the other expressions used, only approximately describe what is meant.

This cannot be otherwise if ordinary language is used, for this language was cre-

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ated to suit physical conditions. Spiritual science describes that which, for clairvoyant organs, flows from the stone, as blue, or blue-red; and that which is felt as coming from the animal as red or red-yellow. In reality, colors of a spiritual kind are seen. The color proceeding the plant is green which little by little turns into a light ethereal pink. The plant is actually that product of nature which in higher worlds resembles, in certain respects, its constitution in the physical world. The same does not apply to the stone and the animal. It must now be clearly understood that the above-mentioned colors only represent the principal shades in the stone, plant and animal kingdom. In reality, all possible intermediate shades are present. Every stone, every plant, every animal has its own particular shade of color. In addition to these there are also the beings of the higher worlds who never incarnate physically, but who have their colors, often wonderful, often horrible. Indeed, the wealth of color in these higher worlds is immeasurably greater than in the physical world.

Once the faculty of seeing with spiritual eyes has been acquired, one then encounters sooner or later the beings here mentioned, some of them higher, some lower than man himself—beings that never enter physical reality.

If this point has been reached, the way to a great deal lies open. But it is inadvisable to proceed further without paying careful heed to what is said or otherwise imparted by the spiritual researcher. And for that, too, which has been described, attention paid to such experienced guidance is the very best thing. Moreover, if a man has the strength and the endurance to travel so far that he fulfills the elementary conditions of enlightenment, he will assuredly seek and find the right guidance.

But in any circumstances, one precaution is necessary, failing which it were better to leave untrodden all steps on the path to higher knowledge. It is necessary that the student should lose none of his qualities as a good and noble man, or his receptivity for all physical reality. Indeed, throughout his training he must continually increase his moral strength, his inner purity, and his power of observation. To give an example: during the elementary exercises on enlightenment, the student must take care always to enlarge his sympathy for the animal and the human worlds, and his sense for the beauty of nature. Failing this care, such exercises would continually blunt that feeling and that sense; the heart would become hardened, and the senses blunted, and that could only lead to perilous results.

How enlightenment proceeds if the student rises, in the sense of the foregoing exercises, from the stone, the plant, and the animal, up to man, and how, after enlightenment, under all circumstances the union of the soul with the spiritual world is effected, leading to initiation—with these things the following chapters will deal, in as far as they can and may do so.

In our time the path to spiritual science is sought by many. It is sought in many ways, and many dangerous and even despicable practices are attempted. It is for this reason that they who claim to know something of the truth in these matters place before others the possibility of learning something of esoteric training. Only so much is here imparted as accords with this possibility. It is necessary that something of the truth should

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become known, in order to prevent error causing great harm. No harm can come to anyone following the way here described, so long as he does not force matters. Only, one thing should be noted: no student should spend more time and strength upon these exercises than he can spare with due regard to his station in life and to his duties; nor should he change anything, for the time being, in the external conditions of his life through taking this path. Without patience no genuine results can be attained. After doing an exercise for a few minutes, the student must be able to stop and continue quietly his daily work, and no thought of these exercises should mingle with the day's work. No one is of use as an esoteric student or will ever attain results of real value who has not learned to wait in the highest and best sense of the word.

The Control of Thoughts and Feelings

When the student seeks the path leading to higher knowledge in the way described in the preceding chapter, he should not omit to fortify himself; throughout his work, with one ever present thought. He must never cease repeating to himself that he may have made quite considerable progress after a certain interval of time, though it may not be apparent to him in the way he perhaps expected; otherwise he can easily lose heart and abandon all attempts after a short time. The powers and faculties to be developed are of a most subtle kind, and differ entirely in their nature from the conceptions previously formed by the student. He had been accustomed to occupy himself exclusively with the physical world; the world of spirit and soul had been concealed from his vision and concepts. It is therefore not surprising if he does not immediately notice the powers of soul and spirit now developing in him. In this respect there is a possibility of discouragement for those setting out on the path to higher knowledge, if they ignore the experience gathered by responsible investigators. The teacher is aware of the progress made by his pupil long before the latter is conscious of it. He knows how the delicate spiritual eyes begin to form themselves long before the pupil is aware of this, and a great part of what he has to say is couched in such terms as to prevent the pupil from losing patience and perseverance before he can himself gain knowledge of his own progress. The teacher, as we know, can confer upon the pupil no powers which are not already latent within him, and his sole function is to assist in the awakening of slumbering faculties. But what he imparts out of his own experience is a pillar of strength for the one wishing to penetrate through darkness to light. Many abandon the path to higher knowledge soon after having set foot upon it, because their progress is not immediately apparent to them. And even when the first experiences begin to dawn upon the pupil, he is apt to regard them as illusions, because he had formed quite different conceptions of what he was going to experience. He loses courage, either because he regards these first experiences as being of no value, or because they appear to him to be so insignificant that he cannot believe they will lead him to any appreciable results within a measurable time. Courage and self-confidence are two beacons which must never be extinguished on the path to higher knowledge. No one will ever travel far who cannot bring himself to repeat, over and over again, an exercise which has failed, apparently, for a countless number of times.

Long before any distinct perception of progress, there rises in the student, from the hidden depths of the soul, a feeling that he is on the right path. This feeling should be

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cherished and fostered, for it can develop into a trustworthy guide. Above all, it is imperative to extirpate the idea that any fantastic, mysterious practices are required for the attainment of higher knowledge. It must be clearly realized that a start has to be made with the thoughts and feelings with which we continually live, and that these feelings and thoughts must merely be given a new direction. Everyone must say to himself: "In my own world of thought and feeling the deepest mysteries lie hidden, only hitherto I have been unable to perceive them." In the end it all resolves itself into the fact that man ordinarily carries body, soul and spirit about with him, and yet is conscious in a true sense only of his body, and not of his soul and spirit. The student becomes conscious of soul and spirit, just as the ordinary person is conscious of his body. Hence it is highly important to give the proper direction to thoughts and feelings, for then only can the perception be developed of all that is invisible in ordinary life. One of the ways by which this development may be carried out will now be indicated. Again, like almost everything else so far explained, it is quite a simple matter. Yet its results are of the greatest consequence, if the necessary devotion and sympathy be applied.

Let the student place before himself the small seed of a plant, and while contemplating this insignificant object, form with intensity the right kind of thoughts, and through these thoughts develop certain feelings. In the first place let him clearly grasp what he really sees with his eyes. Let him describe to himself the shape, color and all other qualities of the seed. Then let his mind dwell upon the following train of thought: "Out of the seed, if planted in the soil, a plant of complex structure will grow." Let him build up this plant in his imagination, and reflect as follows: "What I am now picturing to myself in my imagination will later on be enticed from the seed by the forces of earth and light. If I had before me an artificial object which imitated the seed to such a deceptive degree that my eyes could not distinguish it from a real seed, no forces of earth or light could avail to produce from it a plant." If the student thoroughly grasps this thought so that it becomes an inward experience, he will also be able to form the following thought and couple it with the right feeling: "All that will ultimately grow out of the seed is now secretly unfolded within it as the force of the whole plant. In the artificial imitation of the seed there is no such force present. And yet both appear alike to my eyes. The real seed, therefore, contains something invisible which is not present in the imitation." It is on this invisible something that thought and feeling are to be concentrated. (Anyone objecting that a microscopical examination would reveal the difference between the real seed and the imitation would only show that he had failed to grasp the point. The intention is not to investigate the physical nature of the object, but to use it for the development of psychospiritual forces.)

Let the student fully realize that this invisible something will transmute itself later on into a visible plant, which he will have before him in its shape and color. Let him ponder on the thought: "The invisible will become visible. If I could not think, then that which will only become visible later on could not already make its presence felt to me." Particular stress must be laid on the following point: what the student thinks he must also feel with intensity. In inner tranquility, the thought mentioned above must become a conscious inner experience, to the exclusion of all other thoughts and disturbances. And sufficient time must be taken to allow the thought and the feeling which is coupled with it

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to bore themselves into the soul, as it were. If this be accomplished in the right way, then after a time—possibly not until after numerous attempts—an inner force will make itself felt. This force will create new powers of perception. The grain of seed will appear as if enveloped in a small luminous cloud. In a sensible-supersensible way, it will be felt as a kind of flame. The center of this flame evokes the same feeling that one has when under the impression of the color lilac, and the edges as when under the impression of a bluish tone. What was formerly invisible now becomes visible, for it is created by the power of the thoughts and feelings we have stirred to life within ourselves. The plant itself will not become visible until later, so that the physically invisible now reveals itself in a spiritually visible way.

It is not surprising that all this appears to many as illusion. "What is the use of such visions," they ask, "and such hallucinations?" And many will thus fall away and abandon the path. But this is precisely the important point: not to confuse spiritual reality with imagination at this difficult stage of human evolution, and furthermore, to have the courage to press onward and not become timorous and faint-hearted. On the other hand, however, the necessity must be emphasized of maintaining unimpaired and of perpetually cultivating that healthy sound sense which distinguishes truth from illusion. Fully conscious self-control must never be lost during all these exercises, and they must be accompanied by the same sane, sound thinking which is applied to the details of everyday life. To lapse into reveries would be fatal. The intellectual clarity, not to say the sobriety of thought, must never for a moment be dulled. The greatest mistake would be made if the student's mental balance were disturbed through such exercises, if he were hampered in judging the matters of his daily life as sanely and as soundly as before. He should examine himself again and again to find out if he has remained unaltered in relation to the circumstances among which he lives, or whether he may perhaps have become unbalanced. Above all, strict care must be taken not to drift at random into vague reveries, or to experiment with all kinds of exercises. The trains of thought here indicated have been tested and practiced in esoteric training since the earliest times, and only such are given in these pages. Anyone attempting to use others devised by himself, or of which he may have heard or read at one place or another, will inevitably go astray and find himself on the path of boundless chimera.

As a further exercise to succeed the one just described, the following may be taken: Let the student place before him a plant which has attained the stage of full development. Now let him fill his mind with the thought that the time will come when this plant will wither and die. "Nothing will be left of what I now see before me. But this plant will have developed seeds which, in their turn, will develop to new plants. I again become aware that in what I see, something lies hidden which I cannot see. I fill my mind entirely with the thought: this plant with its form and colors, will in time be no more. But the reflection that it produces seeds teaches me that it will not disappear into nothing. I cannot at present see with my eyes that which guards it from disappearance, any more than I previously could discern the plant in the grain of seed. Thus there is something in the plant which my eyes cannot see. If I let this thought live within me, and if the corresponding feeling be coupled with it, then, in due time, there will again develop in my soul a force which will ripen into a new perception." Out of the plant there again grows a kind

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of spiritual flame-form, which is, of course, correspondingly larger than the one previously described. The flame can be felt as being greenish-blue in the center, and yellowish-red at the outer edge.

It must be explicitly emphasized that the colors here described are not seen as the physical eyes see colors, but that through spiritual perception the same feeling is experienced as in the case of a physical color-impression. To apprehend blue spiritually means to have a sensation similar to the one experienced when the physical eye rests on the color blue. This fact must be noted by all who intend to rise to spiritual perception. Otherwise they will expect a mere repetition of the physical in the spiritual. This could only lead to the bitterest deception.

Anyone having reached this point of spiritual vision is the richer by a great deal, for he can perceive things not only in their present state of being but also in their process of growth and decay. He begins to see in all things the spirit, of which physical eyes can know nothing. And therewith he has taken the first step toward the gradual solution, through personal vision, of the secret of birth and death. For the outer senses a being comes into existence through birth, and passes away through death. This, however, is only because these senses cannot perceive the concealed spirit of the being. For the spirit, birth and death are merely a transformation, just as the unfolding of the flower from the bud is a transformation enacted before our physical eyes. But if we desire to learn this through personal vision we must first awaken the requisite spiritual sense in the way here indicated.

In order to meet another objection, which may be raised by certain people who have some psychic experience, let it at once be admitted that there are shorter and simpler ways, and that there are persons who have acquired knowledge of the phenomena of birth and death through personal vision, without first going through all that has here been described. There are, in fact, people with considerable psychic gifts who need but a slight impulse in order to find themselves already developed. But they are the exceptions, and the methods described above are safer and apply equally to all. It is possible to acquire some knowledge of chemistry in an exceptional way, but if you wish to become a chemist you must follow the recognized and reliable course.

An error fraught with serious consequences would ensue if it were assumed that the desired result could be reached more easily if the grain of seed or the plant mentioned above were merely imagined, were merely pictured in the imagination. This might lead to results, but not so surely as the method here. The vision thus attained would, in most cases, be a mere fragment of the imagination, the transformation of which into genuine spiritual vision would still remain to be accomplished. It is not intended arbitrarily to create visions, but to allow reality to create them within oneself. The truth must well up from the depths of our own soul; it must not be conjured forth by our ordinary ego, but by the beings themselves whose spiritual truth we are to contemplate.

Once the student has found the beginnings of spiritual vision by means of such exercises, he may proceed to the contemplation of man himself. Simple phenomena of human life must first be chosen. But before making any attempt in this direction it is

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imperative for the student to strive for the absolute purity of his moral character. He must banish all through of ever using knowledge gained in this way for his own personal benefit. He must be convinced that he would never, under any circumstances, avail himself in an evil sense of any power he may gain over his fellow-creatures. For this reason, all who seek to discover through personal vision the secrets in human nature must follow the golden rule of true spiritual science. This golden rule is as follows: For every one step that you take in the pursuit of higher knowledge, take three steps in the perfection of your own character. If this rule is observed, such exercise as the following may be attempted:

Recall to mind some person whom you may have observed when he was filled with desire for some object. Direct your attention to this desire. It is best to recall to memory that moment when the desire was at its height, and it was still uncertain whether the object of the desire would be attained. And now fill your mind with this recollection, and reflect on what you can thus observe. Maintain the utmost inner tranquility. Make the greatest possible effort to be blind and deaf to everything that may be going on around you, and take special heed that through the conception thus evoked a feeling should awaken in your soul. Allow this feeling to rise in your soul like a cloud on the cloudless horizon. As a rule, of course, your reflection will be interrupted, because the person whom it concerns was not observed in this particular state of soul for a sufficient length of time. The attempt will most likely fail hundreds and hundreds of times. It is just a question of not losing patience. After many attempts you will succeed in experiencing a feeling in your soul corresponding to the state of soul of the person observed, and you will begin to notice that through this feeling a power grows in your soul that leads to spiritual insight into the state of soul of the other. A picture experienced as luminous appears in your field of vision. This spiritually luminous picture is the so-called astral embodiment of the desire observed in that soul. Again the impression of this picture may be described as flame-like, yellowish-red in the center, and reddish-blue or lilac at the edges. Much depends on treating such spiritual experiences with great delicacy. The best thing is not to speak to anyone about them except to your teacher, if you have one. Attempted descriptions of such experiences in inappropriate words usually only lead to gross self-deception.

Ordinary terms are employed which are not intended for such things, and are therefore too gross and clumsy. The consequence is that in the attempt to clothe the experience in words we are misled into blending the actual experience with all kinds of fantastic delusions. Here again is another important rule for the student: know how to observe silence concerning your spiritual experiences. Yes, observe silence even toward yourself. Do not attempt to clothe in words what you contemplate in the spirit, or to pore over it with clumsy intellect. Lend yourself freely and without reservation to these spiritual impressions, and do not disturb them by reflecting and pondering over them too much. For you must remember that your reasoning faculties are, to begin with, by no means equal to your new experience. You have acquired these reasoning faculties in a life hitherto confined to the physical world of the senses; the faculties you are not acquiring transcend this world. Do not try, therefore, to apply to the new and higher perceptions the standard of the old. Only he who has gained some certainty and steadiness in

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the observation of inner experiences can speak about them, and thereby stimulate his fellow-men.

The exercise just described may be supplemented by the following: Direct your attention in the same way upon a person to whom the fulfillment of some wish, the gratification of some desire, has been granted. If the same rules and precautions be adopted as in the previous instance, spiritual insight will once more be attained. A spiritual insight will once more be attained. A spiritual flame-form will be distinguished, creating an impression of yellow in the center and green at the edges.

By such observation of his fellow-creatures, the student may easily lapse into a moral fault. He may become cold-hearted. Every conceivable effort must be made to prevent this. Such observation should only be practiced by one who has already risen to the level on which complete certainty is found that thoughts are real things. He will then no longer allow himself to think of his fellow-men in a way that is incompatible with the highest reverence for human dignity and human liberty. The thought that a human being could be merely an object of observation must never for a moment be entertained. Self-education must see to it that this insight into human nature should go hand in hand with an unlimited respect for the personal privilege of each individual, and with the recognition of the sacred and inviolable nature of that which dwells in each human being. A feeling of reverential awe must fill us, even in our recollections.

For the present, only these two examples can be given to show how enlightened insight into human nature may be achieved; they will at least serve to point out the way to be taken. By gaining the inner tranquility and repose indispensable for such observation, the student will have undergone a great inner transformation. He will then soon reach the point where this enrichment of his inner self will lend confidence and composure to his outward demeanor. And this transformation of his outward demeanor will again react favorably on his soul. Thus he will be able to help himself further along the road. He will find ways and means of penetrating more and more into the secrets of human nature which are hidden from our external senses, and he will then also become ripe for a deeper insight into the mysterious connections between human nature and all else that exists in the universe. By following this path the student approaches closer and closer to the moment when he can effectively take the first steps of initiation. But before these can be taken, one thing more is necessary, though at first its need will be least of all apparent; later on, however, the student will be convinced of it.

The would-be initiate must bring with him a certain measure of courage and fearlessness. He must positively go out of his way to find opportunities for developing these virtues. His training should provide for their systematic cultivation. In this respect, life itself is a good school—possibly the best school. The student must learn to look danger calmly in the face and try to overcome difficulties unswervingly. For instance, when in the presence of some peril, he must swiftly come to the conviction that fear is of no possible use; I must not feel afraid; I must only think of what is to be done. And he must improve to the extent of feeling, upon occasions which formerly inspired him with fear, that to be frightened, to be disheartened, are things that are out of the question as far as his own inmost self is concerned. By self-discipline in this direction, quite definite quali-

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ties are develop which are necessary for initiation into the higher mysteries. Just as man requires nervous force in his physical being in order to use his physical sense, so also he requires in his soul nature the force which is only developed in the courageous and the fearless. For in penetrating to the higher mysteries he will see things which are concealed from ordinary humanity by the illusion of the senses. If the physical senses do not allow us to perceive the higher truth, they are for this very reason our benefactors. Things are thereby hidden from us which, if realized without due preparation, would throw us into unutterable consternation, and the sight of which would be unendurable. The student must be fit to endure this sight. He loses certain supports in the outer world which he owes to the very illusion surrounding him. It is truly and literally as if the attention of someone were called to a danger which had threatened him for a long time, but of which he knew nothing. Hitherto he felt no fear, but now that he knows, he is overcome by fear, though the danger has not been rendered greater by his knowing it.

The forces at work in the world are both destructive and constructive; the destiny of manifested beings is birth and death. The seer is to behold the working of these forces and the march of destiny. The veil enshrouding the spiritual eyes in ordinary life is to be removed. But man is interwoven with these forces and with this destiny. His own nature harbors destructive and constructive forces. His own soul reveals itself to the seer as undisguised as the other objects. He must not lose strength in the face of this self-knowledge; but strength will fail him unless he brings a surplus on which to draw. For this purpose he must learn to maintain inner calm and steadiness in the face of difficult circumstances; he must cultivate a strong trust in the beneficent powers of existence. He must be prepared to find that many motives which had actuated him hitherto will do so no longer. He will have to recognize that previously he thought and acted in a certain way only because he was still in the throes of ignorance. Reasons that influenced him formerly will now disappear. He often acted out of vanity; he will now see how utterly futile all vanity is for the seer. He often acted out of greed; he will now become aware how destructive all greed is. He will have to develop quite new motives for his thoughts and actions, and it is just for this purpose that courage and fearlessness are required.

It is pre-eminently a question of cultivating this courage and this fearlessness in the inmost depths of thought-life. The student must learn never to despair over failure. He must be equal to the thought: I shall forget that I have failed in this matter, and I shall try once more as though this had not happened. Thus he will struggle through to the firm conviction that the fountain-head of strength from which he may draw is inexhaustible. He struggles ever onward to the spirit which will uplift him and support him, however weak and impotent his earthly self may have proved. He must be capable of pressing on to the future undismayed by any experiences of the past. If the student has acquired these faculties up to a certain point, he is then ripe to hear the real names of things, which are the key to higher knowledge. For initiation consists in this very act of learning to call the things of the world by those names which they bear in the spirit of their divine authors. In these, their names, lies the mystery of things. It is for this reason that the initiates speak a different language from the uninitiated, for the former know the names by which the beings themselves are called into existence.

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In as far as initiation itself can be discussed, this will be done in the following chapter.

Initiation

Initiation is the highest stage in an esoteric training concerning which it is possible to give some indications in a book intended for the genuine public. Whatever lives beyond forms a subject difficult to understand, yet the way to it can be found by all who have passed through preparation, enlightenment, and initiation as far as the lesser mysteries.

The knowledge and proficiency conferred by initiation cannot be obtained in any other manner, except in some far distant future, after many incarnations, by quite different means and in quite a different form. The initiate of today undergoes experiences which would otherwise come to him much later, under quite different circumstances.

The secrets of existence are only accessible to an extent corresponding to man's own degree of maturity. For this reason alone the path to the higher stages of knowledge and power is beset with obstacles. A firearm should not be used until sufficient experience has been gained to avoid disaster, caused by its use. A person initiated today without further ado would lack the experience which he will gain during his future incarnations before he can attain to higher knowledge in the normal course of his development. At the portal of initiation, therefore, this experience must be supplied in some other way. Thus the first instructions given to the candidate for initiation serve as a substitute for these future experiences. These are the so-called trials, which he has to undergo, and which constitute a normal course of inner development resulting from due application to such exercises as are described in the preceding chapters.

These trials are often discussed in books, but it is only natural that such discussions should as a rule give quite false impressions of their nature; for without passing through preparation and enlightenment no one can know anything of these tests and appropriately describe them.

The would-be initiate must come into contact with certain things and facts belonging to the higher worlds, but he can only see and hear them if his feeling is ripe for the perception of the spiritual forms, colors and tones described in the chapters on Preparation and Enlightenment.

The first trial consists in obtaining a truer vision than the average man has of the corporeal attributes of lifeless things, and later of plants, animals and human beings. This does not mean what at present is called scientific knowledge, for it is a question not of science but of vision. As a rule, the would-be initiate proceeds to learn how the objects of nature and the beings gifted with life manifest themselves to the spiritual ear and the spiritual eye. In a certain way these things then lie stripped—naked—before the beholder. The qualities which can then be seen and heard are hidden from the physical eyes and ears. For physical perception they are concealed as if by a veil, and the falling away of this veil for the would-be initiate consists in a process designated as the process of Purification by Fire. The first trial is therefore known as the Fire-Trial.

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For many people, ordinary life is itself a more or less unconscious process of initiation through the Fire-Trial. Such people have passed through a wealth of experience, so that their self-confidence, courage and fortitude have been greatly strengthened in a normal manner while learning to bear sorrow, disappointment and failure in their undertakings with greatness of soul, and especially with equanimity and unbroken strength. Thus they are often initiates without knowing it, and it then needs but little to unseal their spiritual hearing and sight so that they become clairvoyant. For it must be noted that a genuine fire-trial is not intended to satisfy the curiosity of the candidate. It is true that he learns many uncommon things of which others can have no inkling, but this acquisition of knowledge is not the end, but the means to the end; the end consists in the attainment, thanks to this knowledge of the higher worlds, of greater and truer self-confidence, a higher degree of courage, and a magnanimity and perseverance such as cannot, as a rule, be acquired in the lower world.

The candidate may always turn back after the fire-trial. He will then resume his life, strengthened in body and soul, and wait for a future incarnation to continue his initiation. In his present incarnation he will prove himself a more useful member of society and of humanity than he was before. In whatever position he may find himself, his firmness, prudence, resoluteness, and his beneficent influence over his fellows will have greatly increased.

But if, after completing the fire-trial, he should wish to continue the path, a certain writing-system generally adopted in esoteric training must now be revealed to him. The actual teachings manifest themselves in this writing, because the hidden (occult) qualities of things cannot be directly expressed in the words of ordinary writing. The pupils of the initiates translate the teachings into ordinary language as best they can. The occult script reveals itself to the soul when the latter has attained spiritual perception, for it is traced in the spiritual world and remains there for all time. It cannot be learned as an artificial writing is learned and read. The candidate grows into clairvoyant knowledge in an appropriate way, and during this growth a new strength is developed in his soul, as a new faculty, through which he feels himself impelled to decipher the occurrences and the beings of the spiritual world like the characters of a writing. This strength, with the experience it brings of the corresponding trial, might possibly awaken in the soul as though of its own accord, as the soul continually develops, but it will be found safer to follow the instructions of those who are spiritually experienced, and who have some proficiency in deciphering the occult script.

The signs of the occult script are not arbitrarily invented; they correspond to the forces actively engaged in the world. They teach us the language of things. It becomes immediately apparent to the candidate that the signs he is now learning correspond to the forms, colors, and tones which he learned to perceive during his preparation and enlightenment. He realizes that all he learned previously was only like learning to spell, and that he is only now beginning to read in the higher worlds. All the isolated figures, tones, and colors reveal themselves to him now in one great connected whole. Now for the first time he attains complete certainty in observing the higher worlds. Hitherto he could never know positively whether the things he saw were rightly seen. A regular

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understanding, too, is now at last possible between the candidate and the initiate in the spheres of higher knowledge. For whatever form the intercourse between an initiate and another person may take in ordinary life, the higher knowledge in its immediate form can only be imparted by the initiate in the above-mentioned sign-language.

Thanks to this language the student also learns certain rules of conduct and certain duties of which he formerly knew nothing. Having learned these he is able to perform actions endowed with a significance and a meaning such as the actions of one not initiated can never possess. He acts out of the higher worlds. Instructions concerning such action can only be read and understood in the writing in question.

Yet it must be emphasized that there are people unconsciously gifted with the ability and faculty of performing such actions, though they have never undergone an esoteric training. Such helpers of the world and of humanity pass through life bestowing blessings and performing good deeds. For reasons here not to be discussed, gifts have been bestowed on them which appear supernatural. What distinguishes them from the candidate for initiation is only that the latter acts consciously and with full insight into the entire situation. He acquires by training the gifts bestowed on others by higher powers for the good of humanity. We can sincerely revere these favored of God; but we should not for this reason regard the work of esoteric training as superfluous.

Once the student has learned the sign-language there awaits him yet another trial, to prove whether he can move with freedom and assurance in the higher worlds. In ordinary life he is impelled to action by exterior motives. He works at one occupation or another because one duty or another is imposed on him by outward circumstances. It need hardly be mentioned that the student must in no way neglect any of his duties in ordinary life because he is living and working in higher worlds. There is no duty in a higher world that can force a person to neglect any single one of his duties in the ordinary world. The father will remain just as good a father to his family, the mother just as good a mother, and neither the official nor the soldier, nor anyone else will be diverted from his work by becoming an esoteric student. On the contrary, all the qualities which make a human being capable and efficient are enhanced in the student to a degree incomprehensible to the uninitiated. If, in the eyes of the uninitiated, this does not always appear to be the case, it is simply because he often lacks the ability to judge the initiate correctly. The deeds of the latter are not always intelligible to the former. But this only happens in special cases.

At this stage of initiation there are duties to be performed for which no outward stimulus is given. The candidate will not be moved to action by external pressure, but only through adherence to the rules of conduct revealed to him in the occult script. He must now show in this second trial that, led by such rules, he can act with the same firmness and precision with which, for instance, an official performs the duties that belong to him. For this purpose, and in the course of his further training, he will find himself faced by a certain definite task. He must perform some action in consequence of observations made on the basis of what he has learned during preparation and enlightenment. The nature of this action can be understood by means of the occult script with which he is now familiar. If he recognizes his duty and acts rightly, his trial has been successful. The

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success can be recognized in the alteration produced by his action in the figures, colors, and tones apprehended by his spiritual eyes and ears. Exact indications are given, as the training progresses, showing how these figures appear and are experienced after the action has been performed, and the candidate must know how to produce this change. This trial is known as the Water-Trial, because in his activity in these higher worlds the candidate is deprived of the support derived from outward circumstances, as a swimmer is without support when swimming in water that is beyond his depth. This activity must be repeated until the candidate attains absolute poise and assurance.

The importance of this trial lies again in the acquisition of a quality. Through his experiences in the higher worlds, the candidate develops this quality in a short time to such a high degree that he would otherwise have to go through many incarnations, in the ordinary course of his development, before he could acquire it to the same extent. It all centers around the fact that he must be guided only by the results of his higher perception and reading of the occult script, in order to produce the changes in question in these higher regions of existence. Should he, in the course of his activity, introduce any of his own opinions and desires, or should he diverge for one moment from the laws which he has recognized to be right, in order to follow his own willful inclination, then the result produced would differ entirely from what was intended. He would lose sight of the goal to which his action tended, and confusion would result. Hence ample opportunity is given him in the course of this trial to develop self-control. This is the object in view. Here again, this trial can be more easily passed by those whose life, before initiation, has led them to acquire self-control. Anyone having acquired the faculty of following high principles and ideals, while putting into the background all personal predilection; anyone capable of always performing his duty, even though inclinations and sympathies would like to seduce him from this duty—such a person is unconsciously an initiate in the midst of ordinary life. He will need but little to succeed in this particular trial. Indeed, a certain measure of initiation thus unconsciously acquired in life will, as a rule, be indispensable for success in this second trial. For even as it is difficult for those who have not learned to spell correctly in their childhood to make good this deficiency when fully grown up, so too it is difficult to develop the necessary degree of self-control at the moment of looking into the higher worlds, if this ability has not been acquired to a certain degree in ordinary life. The objects of the physical world do not alter, whatever the nature of our wishes, desires, and inclinations. In the higher worlds, however, our wishes, desires, and inclinations are causes that produce effects. If we wish to produce a particular effect in these worlds, we must strictly follow the right rules and subdue every arbitrary impulse.

One human quality is of very special importance at this stage of initiation, namely, an unquestionably sound judgment. Attention should be paid to the training of this faculty during all the previous stages; for it now remains to be proved whether the candidate is shaping in a way that shows him to be fit for the truth path of knowledge.

Further progress is now only possible if he is able to distinguish illusion, superstition, and everything fantastic, from true reality. This is, at first, more difficult to accomplish in the higher stages of existence than in the lower. Every prejudice, every cherished opinion with regard to the things in question, must vanish; truth alone must guide.

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There must be perfect readiness to abandon at once any idea, opinion, or inclination when logical thought demands it. Certainty in higher worlds is only likely to be attained when personal opinion is never considered.

People whose mode of thought tends to fancifulness and superstition can never make progress on the path to higher knowledge. It is indeed a precious treasure that the student is to acquire. All doubt regarding the higher worlds is removed from him. With all their laws they reveal themselves to his gaze. But he cannot acquire this treasure so long as he is the prey of fancies and illusions. It would indeed be fatal if his imagination and his prejudices ran away with his intellect. Dreamers and fantastical people are as unfit for the path to higher knowledge as superstitious people. This cannot be over-emphasized. For the most dangerous enemies on the way to knowledge of the higher worlds lurk in such fantastical reveries and superstitions. Yet no one need to believe that the student loses all sense of poetry in life, all power of enthusiasm because the words: You must be rid of all prejudice, are written over the portal leading to the second trial of initiation, and because over the portal at the entrance to the first trial he read: Without normal common sense all thine efforts are in vain.

If the candidate is in this way sufficiently advanced, a third trial awaits him. He finds here no definite goal to be reached. All is left in his own hands. He finds himself in a situation where nothing impels him to act. He must find his way all alone and out of himself. Things or people to stimulate him to action are non-existent. Nothing and nobody can give him the strength he needs but he himself alone. Failure to find this inner strength will leave him standing where he was. Few of those, however, who have successfully passed the previous trials will fail to find the necessary strength at this point. Either they will have turned back already or they succeed at this point also. All that the candidate requires is the ability to come quickly to terms with himself, for he must here find his higher self in the truest sense of the word. He must rapidly decide in all things to listen to the inspiration of the spirit. There is no time for doubt or hesitation. Every moment of hesitation would prove that he was still unfit. Whatever prevents him from listening to the voice of the spirit must be courageously overcome. It is a question of showing presence of mind in this situation, and the training at this stage is concerned with the perfect development of this quality. All the accustomed inducements to act or even to think now cease. In order not to remain inactive he must not lose himself, for only within himself can he find the one central point of vantage where he can gain a firm hold. No one on reading this, without further acquaintance with these matters, should feel an antipathy for this principle of being thrown back on oneself, for success in this trial brings with it a moment of supreme happiness.

At this stage, no less than at the others, ordinary life is itself an esoteric training for many. For anyone having reached the point of being able, when suddenly confronted with some task or problem in life, to come to a swift decision without hesitation or delay, for him life itself has been a training in this sense. Such situations are here meant in which success is instantly lost if action is not rapid. A person who is quick to act when a misfortune is imminent, whereas a few moments of hesitation would have seen the misfortune an accomplished fact, and who has turned this ability into a permanent personal

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quality, has unconsciously acquired the degree of maturity necessary for the third trial. For at this stage everything centers round the development of absolute presence of mind. This trial is known as the Air-Trial, because while undergoing it the candidate can support himself neither upon the firm basis of external incentive nor upon the figures, tones, and colors which he has learned at the stages of preparation and enlightenment, but exclusively upon himself.

Upon successfully passing this trial the student is permitted to enter the temple of higher wisdom. All that is here said on this subject can only be the slenderest allusion. The task now to be performed is often expressed in the statement that the student must take an oath never to betray anything he has learned. These expressions, however, "oath" and "betray", are inappropriate and actually misleading. There is no question of an oath in the ordinary sense of the word, but rather of an experience that comes at this stage of development. The candidate learns how to apply the higher knowledge, how to place it at the service of humanity. He then begins really and truly to understand the world. It is not so much a question of withholding the higher truths, but far more of serving them in the right way and with the necessary tact. The silence he is to keep refers to something quite different. He acquires this fine quality with regard to things he had previously spoken, and especially with regard to the manner in which they were spoken. He would be a poor initiate who did not place all the higher knowledge he had acquired at the service of humanity, as well and as far as this is possible. The only obstacle to giving information in these matters is the lack of understanding on the part of the recipients. It is true, of course, that the higher knowledge does not lend itself to promiscuous talk; but no one having reached the stage of development described above is actually forbidden to say anything. No other person, no being exacts an oath from him with this intent. Everything is left to his own responsibility, and he learns in every situation to discover within himself what he has to do, and an oath means nothing more than that he has been found qualified to be entrusted with such a responsibility.

If the candidate is found fit for the foregoing experiences, he is then given what is called symbolically the draught of forgetfulness. This means that he is initiated into the secret knowledge that enables him to act without being continually disturbed by the lower memory. This is necessary for the initiate, for he must have full faith in the immediate present. He must be able to destroy the veil of memory which envelops man every moment of his life. If we judge something that happens to us today according to the experience of yesterday, we are exposed to a multitude of errors. Of course this does not mean that experience gained in life should be renounced. It should always be kept in mind as clearly as possible. But the initiate must have the ability to judge every new experience wholly according to what is inherent in it, and let it react upon him, unobscured by the past. We must be prepared at every moment that every object and every being can bring to us some new revelation. If we judge the new by the standard of the old we are liable to error. The memory of past experiences will be of greatest use for the very reason that it enables us to perceive the new. Had we not gone through a definite experience we should perhaps be blind to the qualities of the object or being that comes before us. Thus experience should serve the purpose of perceiving the new and not of judging it by the standard of the old. In this respect the initiate acquires certain definite

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qualities, and thereby many things are revealed to him which remain concealed from the uninitiated.

The second draught presented to the initiate is the draught of remembrance. Through its agency he acquires the faculty of retaining the knowledge of the higher truths ever present in his soul. Ordinary memory would be unequal to this task. We must unite ourselves and become as one with the higher truths. We must not only know them, but be able, quite as a matter of course, to manifest and administer them in living actions, even as we ordinarily eat and drink.

They must become our practice, our habit, our inclination. There must be no need to keep thinking about them in the ordinary sense; they must come to living expression through man himself; they must flow through him as the functions of life through his organism. Thus doth man ever raise himself, in a spiritual sense, to that same stature to which nature raised him in a physical sense.

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III

SOME PRACTICAL ASPECTS

THE training of thoughts and feelings, pursued in the way described in the chapters on Preparation, Enlightenment, and Initiation, introduces into the soul and spirit the same organic symmetry with which nature has constructed the physical body. Before this development, soul and spirit are undifferentiated masses. The clairvoyant perceives them as interlacing, rotating, cloud-like spirals, dully glimmering in reddish, reddish-brown, or reddish-yellow tones. After this training they begin to assume a brilliant yellowish-green, or greenish-blue color, and show a regular structure. This inner regularity leading to higher knowledge, is attained when the student introduces into his thoughts and feelings the same orderly system with which nature has endowed his bodily organs that enable him to see, hear, digest, breath, speak. Gradually he learns to breath and see with this soul, to speak and hear with the spirit.

In the following pages some practical aspects of the higher education of soul and spirit will be treated in greater detail. They are such that anyone can put them into practice regardless of other rules, and thereby be led some distance further into spiritual science.

A particular effort must be made to cultivate the quality of patience. Every symptom of impatience produces a paralyzing, even a destructive effect on the higher faculties that slumber in us. We must not expect an immeasurable view into the higher worlds from one day to the next, for we should assuredly be disappointed. Contentment with the smallest fragment attained, repose and tranquility, must more and more take possession of the soul. It is quite understandable that the student should await results with impatience; but he will achieve nothing so long as he fails to master this impatience. Nor is it of any use to combat this impatience merely in the ordinary sense, for it will become only that much stronger. We overlook it in self-deception while it plants itself all the more firmly in the depths of the soul. It is only when we ever and again surrender ourselves to a certain definite thought, making it absolutely our own, that any results can be attained.

This thought is as follows: I must certainly do everything I can for the training and development of my soul and spirit; but I shall wait patiently until higher powers shall have found me worthy of definite enlightenment. If this thought becomes so powerful in

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the student that it grows into an actual feature of his character, he is treading the right path. This feature soon sets its mark on his exterior. The gaze of his eye becomes steady, the movement of his body becomes sure, his decisions definite, and all that goes under the name of nervousness gradually disappears. Rules that appear trifling and insignificant must be taken into account. For example, supposing someone affronts us. Before our training we should have directed our resentment against the offender; a wave of anger would have surged up within us. In a similar case, however, the thought is immediately present in the mind of the student that such an affront makes no difference to his intrinsic worth. And he does whatever must be done to meet the affront with calm and composure, and not in a spirit of anger. Of course it is not a case of simply accepting every affront, but of acting with the same calm composure when dealing with an affront against our own person as we would if the affront were directed against another person, in whose favor we had the right to intervene. It must always be remembered that this training is not carried out in crude outward processes, but in subtle, silent alterations in the life of thought and feeling.

Patience has the effect of attraction, impatience the effect of repulsion on the treasures of higher knowledge. In the higher regions of existence nothing can be attained by haste and unrest. Above all things, desire and craving must be silenced, for these are qualities of the soul before which all higher knowledge shyly withdraws. However precious this knowledge is accounted, the student must not crave it if he wishes to attain it. If he wishes to have it for his own sake, he will never attain it. This requires him to be honest with himself in his innermost soul. He must in no case be under any illusion concerning his own self. With a feeling of inner truth he must look his own faults, weaknesses, and unfitness full in the face. The moment he tries to excuse to himself any of his weaknesses, he has placed a stone in his way on the path which is to lead him upward. Such obstacles can only be removed by self-enlightenment. There is only one way to get rid of faults and failings, and that is by a clear recognition of them. Everything slumbers in the human soul and can be awakened. A person can even improve his intellect and reason, if he quietly and calmly makes it clear to himself why he is weak in this respect. Such self-knowledge is, of course, difficult, for the temptation to self-deception is immeasurably great. Anyone making a habit of being truthful with himself opens the portal leading to a deeper insight.

All curiosity must fall away from the student. He must rid himself as much as possible of the habit of asking questions merely for the sake of gratifying a selfish thirst for knowledge. He must only ask when knowledge can serve to perfect his own being in the service of evolution. Nevertheless, his delight in knowledge and his devotion to it should in no way be hampered. He should listen devoutly to all that contributes to such an end, and should seek every opportunity for such devotional attention.

Special attention must be paid in esoteric training to the education of the life of desires. This does not mean that we are to become free of desire, for if we are to attain something we must also desire it, and desire will always tend to fulfillment if backed by a particular force. This force is derived from a right knowledge. Do not desire at all until you know what is right in any one sphere. That is one of the golden rules for the student.

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The wise man first ascertains the laws of the world, and then his desires become powers which realize themselves. The following example brings this out clearly. There are certainly many people who would like to learn from their own observation something about their life before birth. Such a desire is altogether useless and leads to no result so long as the person in question has not acquired a knowledge of the laws that govern the nature of the eternal, a knowledge of these laws in their subtlest and most intimate character, through the study of spiritual science. But if, having really acquired this knowledge, he wishes to proceed further, his desire, now ennobled and purified, will enable him to do so.

It is also no use saying: I particularly wish to examine my previous life, and shall study only for this purpose. We must rather be capable of abandoning this desire, of eliminating it altogether, and of studying, at first, with no such intention. We should cultivate a feeling of joy and devotion for what we learn, with no thought of the above end in view. We should learn to cherish and foster a particular desire in such a way that it brings with it its own fulfillment.

If we become angered, vexed or annoyed, we erect a wall around ourselves in the soul-world, and the forces which are to develop the eyes of the soul cannot approach. For instance, if a person angers me he sends forth a psychic current into the soul-world. I cannot see this current as long as I am myself capable of anger. My own anger conceals it from me. We must not, however, suppose that when we are free from anger we shall immediately have a psychic (astral) vision. For this purpose an organ of vision must have been developed in the soul. The beginnings of such an organ are latent in every human being, but remain ineffective as long as he is capable of anger. Yet this organ is not immediately present the moment anger has been combated to a small extent. We must rather persevere in this combating of anger and proceed patiently on our way; then some day we shall find that this eye of the soul has become developed. Of course, anger is not the only failing to be combated for the attainment of this end. Many grow impatient or skeptical, because they have for years combated certain qualities, and yet clairvoyance has not ensued. In that case they have just trained some qualities and allowed others to run riot. The gift of clairvoyance only manifests itself when all those qualities which stunt the growth of the latent faculties are suppressed. Undoubtedly, the beginnings of such seeing and hearing may appear at an earlier period, but these are only young and tender shoots which are subjected to all possible error, and which, if not carefully tended and guarded, may quickly die.

Other qualities which, like anger and vexation, have to be combated, are timidity, superstition, prejudice, vanity and ambition, curiosity, the mania for imparting information, and the making of distinctions in human beings according to the outward characteristics of rank, sex, race, and so forth. In our time it is difficult for people to understand how the combating of such qualities can have anything to do with the heightening of the faculty of cognition. But every spiritual scientist knows that much more depends upon such matters than upon the increase of intelligence and employment of artificial exercises. Especially can misunderstanding arise if we believe that we must become foolhardy in order to be fearless; that we must close our eyes to the differences between

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people, because we must combat the prejudices of rank, race, and so forth. Rather is it true that a correct estimate of all things is to be attained only when we are no longer entangled in prejudice. Even in the ordinary sense it is true that the fear of some phenomenon prevents us from estimating it rightly; that a racial prejudice prevents us from seeing into a man's soul. It is this ordinary sense that the student must develop in all its delicacy and subtlety.

Every word spoken without having been thoroughly purged in thought is a stone thrown in the way of esoteric training. And here something must be considered which can only be explained by giving an example. If anything be said to which we must reply, we must be careful to consider the speaker's opinion, feeling, and even his prejudice, rather than what we ourselves have to say at the moment on the subject under discussion. In this example a refined quality of tact is indicated, to the cultivation of which the student must devote his care. He must learn to judge what importance it may have for the other person if he opposes the latter's opinion with his own. This does not mean that he must withhold his opinion. There can be no question of that. But he must listen to the speaker as carefully and as attentively as he possibly can and let his reply derive its form from what he has just heard. In such cases one particular thought recurs ever and again to the student, and he is treading the right path if this thought lives with him to the extent of becoming a trait of his character. This thought is as follows: The importance lies not in the difference of our opinions but in his discovering through his own effort what is right if I contribute something toward it. Thoughts of this and of a similar nature cause the character and the behavior of the student to be permeated with a quality of gentleness, which is one of the chief means used in all esoteric training. Harshness scares away the soul-pictures that should open the eye of the soul; gentleness clears the obstacles away and unseals the inner organs.

Along with gentleness, another quality will presently be developed in the soul of the student: that of quietly paying attention to all the subtleties in the soul-life of his environment, while reducing to absolute silence any activity within his own soul. The soul-life of his environment will impress itself on him in such a way that his own soul will grow, and as it grows, become regular in its structure, as a plant expanding in the sunlight. Gentleness and patient reserve open the soul to the soul-world and the spirit to the spirit-world. Persevere in silent inner seclusion; close the senses to all that they brought you before your training; reduce to absolute immobility all the thoughts which, according to your previous habits, surged within you; become quite still and silent within, wait in patience, and then the higher worlds will begin to fashion and perfect the organs of sights and hearing in your soul and spirit. Do not expect immediately to see and hear in the world of soul and spirit, for all that you are doing does but contribute to the development of your higher senses, and you will only be able to hear with soul and spirit when you possess these higher senses. Having persevered for a time in silent inner seclusion, go about your customary daily affairs, imprinting deeply upon your mind this thought: "Some day, when I have grown sufficiently, I shall attain that which I am destined to attain," and make no attempt to attract forcefully any of these higher powers to yourself. Every student receives these instructions at the outset. By observing them he perfects himself. If he neglects them, all his labor is in vain. But they are only difficult of achievement for the

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impatient and the unpersevering.

No other obstacles exist save those which we ourselves place in our own path, and which can be avoided by all who really will. This point must be continually emphasized, because many people form an altogether wrong conception of the difficulties that beset the path to higher knowledge. It is easier, in a certain sense, to accomplish the first steps along this path than to get the better of the commonest every-day difficulties without this training. Apart from this, only such things are here imparted as are attended by no danger whatsoever to the health of soul and body. There are other ways which lead more quickly to the goal, but what is here explained has nothing to do with them, because they have certain effects which no experienced spiritual scientist considers desirable. Since fragmentary information concerning these ways is continually finding its way into publicity, express warning must be given against entering upon them. For reasons which only the initiated can understand, these ways can never be made public in their true form. The fragments appearing here and there can never lead to profitable results, but may easily undermine health, happiness, and peace of mind. It would be far better for people to avoid having anything to do with such things than to risk entrusting themselves to wholly dark forces, of whose nature and origin they can know nothing.

Something may here be said concerning the environment in which this training should be undertaken, for this is not without some importance. And yet the case differs for almost every person.

Anyone practicing in an environment filled only with self-seeking interests, as for example, the modern struggle for existence, must be conscious of the fact that these interests are not without their effect on the development of his spiritual organs. It is true that the inner laws of these organs are so powerful that this influence cannot be fatally injurious. Just as a lily can never grow into a thistle, however inappropriate its environment, so, too, the eye of the soul can never grow to anything but its destined shape even though it be subjected to the self-seeking interests of modern cities. But under all circumstances it is well if the student seeks, now and again, his environment in the restful peace, the inner dignity and sweetness of nature. Especially fortunate is the student who can carry out his esoteric training surrounded by the green world of plants, or among the sunny hills, where nature weaves her web of sweet simplicity. This environment develops the inner organs in a harmony which can never ensue in a modern city. More favorably situated than the townsman is the person who, during his childhood at least, had been able to breathe the fragrance of pines, to gaze on snowy peaks, and observe the silent activity of woodland creatures and insects. Yet no city-dweller should fail to give to the organs of his soul and spirit, as they develop, the nurture that comes from the inspired teachings of spiritual research. If our eyes cannot follow the woods in their mantel of green every spring, day by day, we should instead open our soul to the glorious teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, or of St. John's Gospel, or of St. Thomas a Kempis, and to the descriptions resulting from spiritual science.

There are many ways to the summit of insight, but much depends on the right choice. The spiritually experienced could say much concerning these paths, much that might seem strange to the uninitiated. Someone, for instance, might be very far advanced

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on the path; he might be standing, so to speak, at the very entrance of sight and hearing with soul and spirit; he is then fortunate enough to make a journey over the calm or maybe tempestuous ocean, and a veil falls away from the eyes of his soul; suddenly he becomes a seer. Another is also so far advanced that this veil only needs to be loosened; this occurs through some stroke of destiny. On another this stroke might well have had the effect of paralyzing his powers and undermining his energy; for the esoteric student it becomes the occasion of his enlightenment. A third perseveres patiently for years without any marked result. Suddenly, while silently seated in his quiet chamber, spiritual light envelops him; the walls disappear, become transparent for his soul, and a new world expands before his eyes that have become seeing, or resounds in his ears that have become spiritually hearing.

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IV

THE CONDITIONS OF ESOTERIC TRAINING

THE conditions attached to esoteric training are not arbitrary. They are the natural outcome of esoteric knowledge. Just as no one can become a painter who refuses to handle a paint-brush, so, too, no one can receive esoteric training who is unwilling to meet the demands considered necessary by the teacher. In the main, the latter can give nothing but advice, and everything he says should be accepted in this sense. He has already passed through the preparatory stages leading to a knowledge of the higher worlds, and knows from experience what is necessary. It depends entirely upon the free-will of each individual human being whether or not he choose to tread the same path. To insist on being admitted to esoteric training without fulfilling the conditions would be equivalent to saying: "Teach me how to paint, but do not ask me to handle a paint-brush." The teacher can never offer anything unless the recipient comes forward to meet him of his own free-will. But it must be emphasized that a general desire for higher knowledge is not sufficient. This desire will, of course, be felt by many, but nothing can be achieved by it alone so long as the special conditions attached to esoteric training are not accepted. This point should be considered by those who complain that the training is difficult. Failure or unwillingness to fulfill these strict conditions must entail the abandonment of esoteric training, for the time being. It is true, the conditions are strict, yet they are not harsh, since their fulfillment not only should be, but indeed must be a voluntary action.

If this fact be overlooked, esoteric training can easily appear in the light of a coercion of the soul or the conscience; for the training is based on the development of the inner life, and the teacher must necessarily give advice concerning this inner life. But there is no question of compulsion when a demand is met out of free choice. To ask of the teacher: "Give me your higher knowledge, but leave me my customary emotions, feelings, and thoughts," would be an impossible demand. In this case the gratification of curiosity and desire for knowledge would be the only motive. When pursued in such a spirit, however, higher knowledge can never be attained.

Let us now consider in turn the conditions imposed on the student. It should be emphasized that the complete fulfillment of any one of these conditions is not insisted upon, but only the corresponding effort. No one can wholly fulfill them, but everyone

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can start on the path toward them. It is the effort of will that matters, and the ready disposition to enter upon this path.

1. The first condition is that the student should pay heed to the advancement of bodily and spiritual health. Of course, health does not depend, in the first instance, upon the individual; but the effort to improve in this respect lies within the scope of all. Sound knowledge can alone proceed from sound human beings. The unhealthy are not rejected, but it is demanded of the student that he should have the will to lead a healthy life. In this respect he must attain the greatest possible independence.

The good counsels of others, freely bestowed though generally unsought, are as a rule superfluous. Each must endeavor to take care of himself. From the physical aspect it will be more a question of warding off harmful influences than of anything else. In fulfilling our duties we must often do things that are detrimental to our health. We must decide at the right moment to place duty higher than the care of our health. But just think how much can be avoided with a little good will. Duty must in many cases stand higher than health, often, even, than life itself; but pleasure must never stand higher, as far as the student is concerned. For him pleasure can only be a means to health and to life, and in this connection we must, above all, be honest and truthful with ourselves. There is no use in leading an ascetic life when the underlying motive is the same in this case as in other enjoyments. Some may derive satisfaction from asceticism just as others can from wine-bibbing, but they must not imagine that this sort of asceticism will assist them in attaining higher knowledge. Many ascribe to their circumstances everything which apparently prevents them from making progress. They say they cannot develop themselves under their conditions of life. Now, many may find it desirable for other reasons to change their conditions of life, but no one need do so for the purpose of esoteric training.

For the latter, a person need only do as much as possible, whatever his position, to further the health of body and soul. Every kind of work can serve the whole of humanity; and it is a surer sign of greatness of soul to perceive clearly how necessary for this whole is a petty, perhaps even an offensive employment than to think: "This work is not good enough for me; I am destined for something better." Of special importance for the student is the striving for complete health of mind. An unhealthy life of thought and feeling will not fail to obstruct the path to higher knowledge. Clear, calm thinking, with stability of feeling and emotion, form here the basis of all work. Nothing should be further removed from the student than an inclination toward a fantastical, excitable life, toward nervousness, exaggeration, and fanaticism. He should acquire a healthy outlook on all circumstances of life; he should meet the demands of life with steady assurance, quietly letting all things make their impression on him and reveal their message. He should be at pains to do justice to life on every occasion. All one-sided and extravagant tendencies in his sentiments and criticisms should be avoided. Failing this, he would find his way merely into worlds of his own imagination, instead of higher worlds; in place of truth, his own pet opinions would assert themselves. It is better for the student to be matter-of-fact, than excitable and fantastic.

2. The second condition is that the student should feel himself co-ordinated as a link in the whole of life. Much is included in the fulfillment of this condition, but each can

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only fulfill it in his own manner. If I am a teacher, and my pupil does not fulfill my expectations, I must not divert my resentment against him but against myself. I must feel myself as one with my pupil, to the extent of asking myself: "Is my pupil's deficiency not the result of my own action?" Instead of directing my feelings against him I shall rather reflect on my own attitude, so that the pupil may in the future be better able to satisfy my demands. Proceeding from such an attitude, a change will come over the student's whole way of thinking. This holds good in all things, great or small. Such an attitude of mind, for instance, alters the way I regard a criminal.

I suspend my judgment and say to myself: "I am, like him, only a human being. Through favorable circumstances I received an education which perhaps alone saved me from a similar fate." I may then also come to the conclusion that this human brother of mine would have become a different man had my teachers taken the same pains with him they took with me. I shall reflect on the fact that something was given to me which was withheld from him, that I enjoy my fortune precisely because it was denied him. And then I shall naturally come to think of myself as a link in the whole of humanity and a sharer in the responsibility for everything that occurs. This does not imply that such a thought should be immediately translated into external acts of agitation. It should be cherished in stillness within the soul. Then quite gradually it will set its mark on the outward demeanor of the student.

In such matters each can only begin by reforming himself. It is of no avail, in the sense of the foregoing thoughts, to make general demands on the whole of humanity. It is easy to decide what men ought to be; but the student works in the depths, not on the surface. It would therefore be quite wrong to relate the demand here indicated with an external, least of all political, demands; with such matters this training can have nothing to do. Political agitators know, as a rule, what to demand of other people; but they say little of demands on themselves.

3. This brings us to the third condition. The student must work his way upward to the realization that his thoughts and feelings are as important for the world as his actions. It must be realized that it is equally injurious to hate a fellow-being as to strike him. The realization will then follow that by perfecting ourselves we accomplish something not only for ourselves, but for the whole world. The world derives equal benefit from our untainted feelings and thoughts as from our good demeanor, and as long as we cannot believe in this cosmic importance of our inner life, we are unfit for the path that is here described. We are only filled with the right faith in the significance of our inner self, of our soul, when we work at it as though it were at least as real as all external things. We must admit that our every feeling produces an effect, just as does every action of our hand.

4. These words already express the fourth condition: to acquire the conviction that the real being of man does not lie in his exterior but in his interior. Anyone regarding himself as a product of the outer world, as a result of the physical world, cannot succeed in this esoteric training, for the feeling that we are beings of soul and spirit forms its very basis. The acquisition of this feeling renders the student fit to distinguish between inner duty and outward success. He learns that the one cannot be directly measured by

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the other. He must find the proper mean between what is indicated by external conditions and what he recognizes as the right conduct for himself. He should not force upon his environment anything for which it can have no understanding, but also he must be quite free from the desire to do only what can be appreciated by those around him. The voice of his own soul struggling honestly toward knowledge must bring him the one and only recognition of the truths for which he stands. But he must learn as much as he possibly can from his environment so as to discover what those around him need, and what is good for them. In this way he will develop within himself what is known in spiritual science as the "spiritual balance." An open heart for the needs of the outer world lies on one of the scales, and inner fortitude and unfaltering endurance on the other.

5. This brings us to the fifth condition: steadfastness in carrying out a resolution. Nothing should induce the student to deviate from a resolution he may have taken, save only the perception that he was in error. Every resolution is a force, and if this force does not produce an immediate effect at the point to which it was applied, it works nevertheless on in its own way. Success is only decisive when an action arises from desire. But all actions arising from desire are worthless in relation to the higher worlds. There, love for an action is alone the decisive factor. In this love, every impulse that impels the student to action should fulfill itself. Undismayed by failure, he will never grow weary of endeavoring repeatedly to translate some resolution into action. And in this way he reaches the stage of not waiting to see the outward effect of his actions, but of contenting himself with performing them. He will learn to sacrifice his actions, even his whole being, to the world, however the world may receive his sacrifice. Readiness for a sacrifice, for an offering such as this, must be shown by all who would pursue the path of esoteric training.

6. A sixth condition is the development of a feeling of thankfulness for everything with which man is favored. We must realize that our existence is a gift from the entire universe. How much is needed to enable each one of us to receive and maintain his existence! How much to we not owe to nature and to our fellow human beings! Thoughts such as these must come naturally to all who seek esoteric training, for if the latter do not feel inclined to entertain them, they will be incapable of developing within themselves that all-embracing love which is necessary for the attainment of higher knowledge. Nothing can reveal itself to us which we do not love. And every revelation must fill us with thankfulness, for we ourselves are the richer for it.

7. All these conditions must be united in a seventh: to regard life unceasingly in the manner demanded by these conditions. The student thus makes it possible to give his life the stamp of uniformity. All his modes of expression will, in this way, be brought into harmony, and no longer contradict each other. And thus he will prepare himself for the inner tranquillity he must attain during the preliminary steps of his training.

Anyone sincerely showing the good will to fulfill these conditions may decide to seek esoteric training. He will then be ready to follow the advice given above. Much of his advice may appear to be merely on the surface, and many will perhaps say that they did not expect the training to proceed in such strict forms. But everything interior must manifest itself in an exterior way, and just as a picture is not evident when it exists only in the mind of the painter, so, too, there can be no esoteric training without outward ex-

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pression. Disregard for strict forms is only shown by those who do not know that the exterior is the avenue of expression for the interior. No doubt it is the spirit that really matters, and not the form; but just as form without spirit is null and void, so also would spirit remain inactive if it did not create for itself a form.

The above conditions are calculated to render the student strong enough to fulfill the further demands made on him during this training. If he fail in these conditions he will hesitate before each new demand, and without them he will lack that faith in man which he must possess. For all striving for truth must be founded on faith in and true love for man. But though this is the foundation it is not the source of all striving for truth, for such striving can only flow from the soul's own fountain-head of strength. And the love of man must gradually widen to a love for all living creatures, yes, for all existence. Through failure to fulfill the condition here given, the student will lack the perfect love for everything that fashions and creates, and the inclination to refrain from all destruction as such. He must so train himself that not only in his actions but also in his words, feelings, and thoughts he will never destroy anything for the sake of destruction. His joy must be in growth and life, and he must only lend his hand to destruction, when he is also able, through and by means of destruction, to promote new life. This does not mean that the student must simply look on while evil runs riot, but rather that he must seek even in evil that side through which he may transform it into good. He will then see more and more clearly that evil and imperfection may best be combated by the creation of the good and the perfect. The student knows that out of nothing, nothing can be created, but also that the imperfect can be transformed into the perfect. Anyone developing within himself the disposition to create, will soon find himself capable of facing evil in the right way.

It must be clearly realized that the purpose of this training is to build and not to destroy. The student should therefore bring with him the good will for sincere and devoted work, and not the intention to criticize and destroy. He should be capable of devotion, for he must learn what he does not yet know; he should look reverently on that which discloses itself. Work and devotion, these are the fundamental qualities which must be demanded of the student. Some come to realize that they are making no progress, though in their own opinion they are untiringly active. The reason is that they have not grasped the meaning of work and devotion in the right way. Work done for the sake of success will be the least successful, and learning pursued without devotion will be the least conducive to progress. Only the love of work, and not of success, leads to progress. And if in learning the student seeks straight thinking and sound judgment, he need not stunt his devotion by doubts and suspicions.

We are not reduced to service subjection in listening to some information with quiet devotion and because we do not at once oppose it with our own opinion. Anyone having advanced some way in the attainment of higher knowledge knows that he owes everything to quiet attention and active reflection, and not to willful personal judgment. We should always bear in mind that we do not need to learn what we are already able to judge. Therefore if our sole intention is to judge, we can learn nothing more. Esoteric training, however, center in learning; we must have absolutely the good will to be learners. If we cannot understand something, it is far better not to judge than to judge ad-

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versely. We can wait until later for a true understanding. The higher we climb the ladder of knowledge, the more do we require the faculty of listening with quiet devotion. All perception of truth, all life and activity in the world of the spirit, become subtle and delicate in comparison with the processes of the ordinary intellect and of life in the physical world. The more the sphere of our activity widens out before us, the more delicate are the processes in which we are engaged. It is for this reason that men arrive at such different opinions and points of view regarding the higher regions. But there is one and only one opinion regarding higher truths and this one opinion is within reach of all who, through work and devotion, have so risen that they can really behold truth and contemplate it.

Opinions differing from the one true opinion can only be arrived at when people, insufficiently prepared, judge in accordance with their pet theories, their habitual ways of thought, and so forth. Just as there is only one correct opinion concerning a mathematical problem, so also is this true with regard to the higher worlds. But before such an opinion can be reached, due preparation must first be undergone. If this were only considered, the conditions attached to esoteric training would be surprising to none. It is indeed true that truth and the higher life abide in every soul, and that each can and must find them for himself. But they lie deeply buried, and can only be brought up from their deep shafts after all obstacles have been cleared away. Only the experienced can advise how this may be done. Such advice is found in spiritual science. No truth is forced on anyone; no dogma is proclaimed; a way only is pointed out. It is true that everyone could find this way unaided, but only perhaps after many incarnations. By esoteric training this way is shortened. We thus reach more quickly a point from which we can cooperate in those worlds where the salvation and evolution of man are furthered by spiritual work.

This brings to an end the indications to be given in connection with the attainment of knowledge of higher worlds. In the following chapter, and in further connection with the above, it will be shown how this development affects the higher elements of the human organism (the soul-organism or astral body, and the spirit or thought-body.) In this way the indications here given will be placed in a new light, and it will be possible to penetrate them in a deeper sense.

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V

SOME RESULTS OF INITIATION

ONE of the fundamental principles of true spiritual science is that the one who devotes himself to its study should do so with full consciousness; he should attempt nothing and practice nothing without knowledge of the effect produced. A teacher of spiritual science who gives advice or instruction will, at the same time, always explain to those striving for higher knowledge the effects produced on body, soul and spirit, if his advice and instructions be followed.

Some effects produced upon the soul of the student will here be indicated. For only those who know such things as they are here communicated can undertake in full consciousness the exercises that lead to knowledge of the higher worlds. Without the latter no genuine esoteric training is possible, for it must be understood that all groping in the dark is discouraged, and that failure to pursue this training with open eyes may lead to mediumship, but not to exact clairvoyance in the sense of spiritual science.

The exercises described in the preceding chapters, if practiced in the right way, involve certain changes in the organism of the soul (astral body). The latter is only perceptible to the clairvoyant, and may be compared to a cloud, psycho-spiritually luminous to a certain degree, in the center of which the physical body is discernible. (A description will be found in the author's book, *Theosophy*.) In this astral body desires, lusts, passions, and ideas become visible in a spiritual way. Sensual appetites, for instance, create the impression of a dark red radiance with a definite shape; a pure and noble thought finds its expression in a reddish-violet radiance; the clear-cut concept of the logical thinker is experienced as a yellowish figure with sharply defined outline; the confused thought of the muddled head appears as a figure with vague outline. The thoughts of a person with one-sided, queer views appear sharply outlined but immobile, while the thoughts of people accessible to the points of view of others are seen to have mobile, changeable outlines. (In all these and the following descriptions it must be noted that by seeing a color, spiritual seeing is meant. When the clairvoyant speaks of "seeing red," he means: "I have an experience, in a psycho-spiritual way, which is equivalent to the physical experience when an impression of red is received." This mode of expression is here used because it is perfectly natural to the clairvoyant. If this point is overlooked, a mere color-vision may easily be mistaken for a genuine clairvoyant experience.)

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The further the student advances in his inner development, the more regular will be the differentiation within his astral body. The latter is confused and undifferentiated in the case of a person of undeveloped inner life; yet the clairvoyant can perceive even the unorganized astral body as a figure standing out distinctly from its environment. It extends from the center of the head to the middle of the physical body, and appears like an independent body possessing certain organs. The organs now to be considered are perceptible to the clairvoyant near the following parts of the physical body: the first between the eyes; the second near the larynx; the third in the region of the heart; the fourth in the so-called pit of the stomach; the fifth and sixth are situated in the abdomen. These organs are technically known as wheels, chakrams, or lotus flowers. They are so called on account of their likeness to wheels or flowers, but of course it should be clearly understood that such an expression is not to be applied more literally than is the term "wings" when referring to the two halves of the lungs. Just as there is no question of wings in the case of the lungs, so, too, in the case of the lotus flowers the expression must be taken figuratively. In undeveloped persons these lotus flowers are dark in color, motionless and inert. In the clairvoyant, however, they are luminous, mobile, and of variegated color. Something of this kind applies to the medium, though in a different way; this question, however, need not be pursued here any further.

Now, when the student begins his exercises, the lotus flowers become more luminous; later on they begin to revolve. When this occurs, clairvoyance begins. For these flowers are the sense-organs of the soul, and their revolutions express the fact that the clairvoyant perceives supersensibly. What was said previously concerning spiritual seeing applies equally to these revolutions and even to the lotus flowers themselves. No one can perceive the supersensible until he has developed his astral senses in this way. Thanks to the spiritual organ situated in the vicinity of the larynx, it becomes possible to survey clairvoyantly the thoughts and mentality of other beings, and to obtain a deeper insight into the true laws of natural phenomena. The organ situated near the heart permits of clairvoyant knowledge of the sentiments and disposition of other souls. When developed, this organ also makes it possible to observe certain deeper forces in animals and plants. By means of the organ in the so-called pit of the stomach, knowledge is acquired of the talents and capacities of souls; by its means, too, the part played by animals, plants, stones, metals, atmospheric phenomena and so on in the household of nature becomes apparent.

The organ in the vicinity of the larynx has sixteen petals or spokes; the one in the region of the heart twelve, and the one in the pit of the stomach ten.

Now certain activities of the soul are connected with the development of these organs, and anyone devoting himself to them in a certain definite way contributes something to the development of the corresponding organs. In the sixteen-petalled lotus, eight of its sixteen petals were developed in the remote past during an earlier stage of human evolution. Man himself contributed nothing to this development; he received them as a gift from nature, at a time when his consciousness was in a dull, dreamy condition. At that stage of human evolution they were in active use, but the manner of their activity was only compatible with that dull state of consciousness. As consciousness became clearer

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and brighter, the petals became obscured and ceased their activity. Man himself can now develop the remaining eight petals by means of conscious exercises, and thereby the whole lotus flower becomes luminous and mobile. The acquisition of certain faculties depends on the development of each one of the sixteen petals. Yet, as already shown, only eight can be consciously developed; the remainder then appear of their own accord.

The development proceeds in the following manner. The student must first apply himself with care and attention to certain functions of the soul hitherto exercised by him in a careless and inattentive manner. There are eight such functions. The first is the way in which ideas and conceptions are acquired. In this respect people usually allow themselves to be led by chance alone. They see or hear one thing or another and form their ideas accordingly. As long as this is the case the sixteen petals of the lotus flower remain ineffective. It is only when the student begins to take his self-education in hand, in this respect, that the petals become effective. His ideas and conceptions must be guarded; each single idea should acquire significance for him; he should see it in a definite message instructing him concerning the things of the outer world, and he should derive no satisfaction from ideas devoid of such significance. He must govern his mental life so that it becomes a true mirror of the outer world, and direct his effort to the exclusion of incorrect ideas from his soul.

The second of these functions is concerned with the control of resolutions. The student must not resolve upon even the most trifling act without well-founded and thorough consideration. Thoughtless and meaningless actions should be foreign to his nature. He should have well-considered grounds for everything he does, and abstain from everything to which no significant motive urges him.

The third function concerns speech. The student should utter no word that is devoid of sense and meaning; all talking for the sake of talking draws him away from his path. He must avoid the usual kind of conversation, with its promiscuous discussion of indiscriminately varied topics. This does not imply his preclusion from intercourse with his fellows. It is precisely in such intercourse that his conversation should develop to significance. He is ready to converse with everyone, but he does so thoughtfully and with thorough deliberation. He never speaks without grounds for what he says. He seeks to use neither too many nor too few words.

The fourth is the regulation of outward action. The student tries to adjust his actions in such a way that they harmonize with the actions of his fellow-men and with the events in his environment. He refrains from actions which are disturbing to others and in conflict with his surroundings. He seeks to adjust his actions so that they combine harmoniously with his surroundings and with his position in life. When an external motive causes him to act he considers how he can best respond. When the impulse proceeds from himself he weighs with minute care the effects of his activity.

The fifth function includes the management of the whole of life. The student endeavors to live in conformity with both nature and spirit. Never overhasty, he is also never indolent. Excessive activity and laziness are equally alien to him. He looks upon

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life as a means for work and disposes it accordingly. He regulates his habits and the care of his health in such a way that a harmonious whole is the outcome.

The sixth is concerned with human endeavor. The student tests his capacities and proficiency, and conducts himself in the light of such self-knowledge. He attempts nothing beyond his powers, yet seems to omit nothing within their scope. On the other hand, he sets himself aims that have to do with the ideals and the great duties of a human being. He does not mechanically regard himself as a wheel in the vast machinery of mankind but seeks to comprehend the tasks of his life, and to look out beyond the limit of the daily and trivial. He endeavors to fulfill his obligations ever better and more perfectly.

The seventh deals with the effort to learn as much from life as possible. Nothing passes before the student without giving him occasion to accumulate experience which is of value to him for life. If he has performed anything wrongly or imperfectly, he lets this be an incentive for meeting the same contingency later on rightly and perfectly. When others act he observes them with the same end in view. He tries to gather a rich store of experience, ever returning to it for counsel; nor indeed will he ever do anything without looking back on experiences from which he can derive help in his decisions and affairs.

Finally, the eighth is as follows: The student must, from time to time, glance introspectively into himself, sink back into himself, take counsel with himself, form and test the fundamental principles of his life, run over in his thoughts the sum total of his knowledge, weigh his duties, and reflect upon the content and aim of life. All these things have been mentioned in the preceding chapters; here they are merely recapitulated in connection with the development of the sixteen-petalled lotus. By means of these exercises the latter will become ever more and more perfect, for it is upon such exercises that the development of clairvoyance depends. The better the student's thoughts and speech harmonize with the processes in the outer world, the more quickly will he develop this faculty. Whoever thinks and speaks what is contrary to truth destroys something in the germ of his sixteen-petalled lotus. Truthfulness, uprightness, and honesty are in this connection creative forces, while mendacity, deceitfulness, and dishonesty are destructive forces. The student must realize, however, that actual deeds are needed, and not merely good intentions. If I think or say anything that does not conform with reality, I kill something in my spiritual organs, even though I believe my intentions to be ever so good. It is here as with the child which needs must burn itself when it touches fire, even though it did so out of ignorance. The regulation of the above activities of the soul in the manner described causes the sixteen-petalled lotus to shine in glorious hues, and imparts to it a definite movement. Yet it must be noted that the faculty of clairvoyance cannot make its appearance before a definite degree of development of the soul has been reached. It cannot appear as long as it is irksome for the student to regulate his life in this manner. He is still unfit as long as the activities described above are a matter of special pre-occupation for him. The first traces of clairvoyance only appear when he has reached the point of being able to live in the specified way, as a person habitually lives. These things must then no longer be laborious, but must have become a matter of course. There must be no need for him to be continually watching himself and urging himself on to live in

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this way. It must all have become a matter of habit.

Now this lotus flower may be made to develop in another way by following certain other instructions. But all such methods are rejected by true spiritual science, for they lead to the destruction of physical health and to moral ruin. They are easier to follow than those here described. The latter, though protracted and difficult, lead to the true goal and cannot but strengthen morally.

The distorted development of a lotus flower results not only in illusions and fantastic conceptions, should a certain degree of clairvoyance be acquired, but also in errors and instability in ordinary life. Such a development may be the cause of timidity, envy, vanity, haughtiness, willfulness and so on in a person who hitherto was free from these defects. It has already been explained that eight of the sixteen petals of this lotus flower were developed in a remote past, and that these will re-appear of themselves in the course of esoteric development. All the effort and attention of the student must be devoted to the remaining eight. Faulty training may easily result in the re-appearance of the earlier petals alone, while the new petals remain stunted. This will ensue especially if too little logical, rational thinking is employed in the training. It is of supreme importance that the student should be a rational and clear-thinking person, and of further importance that he should practice the greatest clarity of speech. People who begin to have some presentiment of supersensible things are apt to wax talkative on this subject, thereby retarding their normal development. The less one talks about these matters the better. Only someone who has achieved a certain degree of clarity should speak about them.

At the beginning of their instruction, students are as a rule astonished at the teacher's lack of curiosity concerning their own experiences. It would be much better for them to remain entirely silent on this subject, and to content themselves with mentioning only whether they have been successful or unsuccessful in performing the exercises and observing the instructions given them. For the teacher has quite other means of estimating their progress than the students' own statements. The eight petals now under consideration always become a little hardened through such statements, whereas they should be kept soft and supple. The following example taken, for the sake of clarity, not from the supersensible world but from ordinary life, will illustrate this point. Suppose I hear a piece of news and thereupon immediately form an opinion. Shortly afterwards I receive some further news which does not tally with the previous information. I am thereby obliged to reverse my previous judgment. The result is an unfavorable influence upon my sixteen-petalled lotus.

Quite the contrary would have been the case had I, in the first place, suspended judgment, and remained silent both inwardly in thought and outwardly in word concerning the whole affair, until I had acquired reliable grounds for forming my judgment. Caution in the formation and pronouncement of judgments becomes, by degrees, the special characteristic of the student. On the other hand his receptivity for impressions and experiences increases; he lets them pass over him silently, so as to collect and have the largest possible number of facts at his disposal when the time comes to form his opinions. Bluish-red and reddish-pink shades color the lotus flower as the result of such

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circumspection, whereas in the opposite case dark red and orange shades appear. (Students will recognize in the conditions attached to the development of the sixteen-petalled lotus the instructions given by the Buddha to his disciples for the Path. Yet there is no question here of teaching Buddhism, but of describing conditions governing development which are the natural outcome of spiritual science. The fact that these conditions correspond with certain teachings of the Buddha is no reason for not finding them true in themselves.)

The twelve-petalled lotus situated in the region of the heart is developed in a similar way. Half its petals, too, were already existent and in active use in a remote stage of human evolution. Hence these six petals need not now be especially developed in esoteric training; they appear of themselves and begin to revolve when the student sets to work on the other six. Here again he learns to promote this development by consciously controlling and directing certain inner activities in a special way.

It must be clearly understood that the perceptions of each single organ of soul or spirit bear a different character. The twelve and sixteen-petalled lotus flowers transmit quite different perceptions. The latter perceives forms. The thoughts and mentality of other beings and the laws governing natural phenomena become manifest, through the sixteen-petalled lotus, as figures, not rigid motionless figures but mobile forms filled with life. The clairvoyant in whom this sense is developed can describe, for every mode of thought and for every law of nature, a form which expresses them. A revengeful thought, for example, assumes an arrow-like, pronged form, while a kindly thought is often formed like an opening flower, and so on. Clear-cut, significant thoughts are regular and symmetrical in form, while confused thoughts have wavy outlines. Quite different perceptions are received through the twelve-petalled lotus. These perceptions may, in a sense, be likened to warmth and cold, as applied to the soul. A clairvoyant equipped with this faculty feels this warmth and cold streaming out from the forms discerned by the sixteen-petalled lotus. Had he developed the sixteen and not the twelve-petalled lotus he would only perceive, in the kindly thought, for instance, the figure described above, while a clairvoyant in whom both senses were developed would also notice what can only be described as soul-warmth, flowing from the thought. It would be noted in passing that esoteric training never develops one organ without the other, so that the above-mentioned example may be regarded as a hypothetical case in behalf of clarity. The twelve-petalled lotus, when developed, reveals to the clairvoyant a deep understanding of the processes of nature. Rays of soul-warmth issue from every manifestation of growth and development, while everything in the process of decay, destruction, ruin, gives an impression of cold.

The development of this sense may be furthered in the following manner. To begin with, the student endeavors to regulate his sequence of thought (control of thought). Just as the sixteen-petalled lotus is developed by cultivating thoughts that conform with truth and are significant, so, too, the twelve-petalled lotus is developed by inwardly controlling the trains of thought. Thoughts that dart to and fro like will-o'-the-wisps and follow each other in no logical or rational sequence, but merely by pure chance, destroy its form. The closer thought is made to follow upon thought, and the more strictly every-

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thing of illogical nature is avoided, the more suitable will be the form this sense organ develops. If the student hears illogical thoughts he immediately lets the right thoughts pass through his mind. He should not, however, withdraw in a loveless way from what is perhaps an illogical environment in order to further his own development. Neither should he feel himself impelled to correct all the illogical thoughts expressed around him. He should rather silently co-ordinate the thoughts as they pour in upon him, and make them conform to logic and sense, and at the same time endeavor in every case to retain this same method in his own thinking.

An equal consistency in his actions forms the second requirement (control of actions). All inconstancy, all disharmony of action, is baneful for the lotus here in question. When the student performs some action he must see to it that his succeeding action follows in logical sequence, for if he acts from day to day with variable intent he will never develop the faculty here considered.

The third requirement is the cultivation of endurance (perseverance). The student is impervious to all influences which would divert him from the goal he has set himself, as long as he can regard it as the right goal. For him, obstacles contain a challenge that impels him to surmount them, but never a reason for giving up.

The fourth requirement is forbearance (tolerance) toward persons, creatures, and also circumstances. The student suppresses all superfluous criticism of everything that is imperfect, evil and bad, and seeks rather to understand everything that comes under his notice. Even as the sun does not withdraw its light from the bad and the evil, so he, too, does not refuse them an intelligent sympathy. Should some trouble befall him he does not proceed to condemn and criticize, but accepts the inevitable, and endeavors to the best of his ability to give the matter a turn for the best. He does not consider the opinions of others merely from his own standpoint, but seeks to put himself into the other's position.

The fifth requirement is impartiality toward everything that life brings. In this connection we speak of faith and trust. The student meets every human being and every creature with this trust, and lets it inspire his every action. Upon hearing some information, he never says to himself: "I don't believe it; it contradicts my present opinions." He is far rather ready to test and rectify his views and opinions. He ever remains receptive for everything that confronts him, and he trusts in the efficacy of his undertakings. Timidity and skepticism are banished from his being. He harbors a faith in the power of his intentions. A hundred failures cannot rob him of this faith. This is the "faith which can move mountains."

The sixth requirement is the cultivation of a certain inner balance (equanimity). The student endeavors to retain his composure in the face of joy and sorrow, and eradicates the tendency to fluctuate between the seventh heaven of joy and the depths of despair. Misfortune and danger, fortune and advancement alike find him ready armed.

The reader will recognize in the qualities here described the six attributes which the candidate for initiation strives to acquire. The intention has been to show their connection with the spiritual organ known as the twelve-petalled lotus flower. As before,

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special instructions can be given to bring this lotus flower to fruition, but here again the perfect symmetry of its form depends on the development of the qualities mentioned, the neglect of which results in this organ being formed into a caricature of its proper shape. In this case, should a certain clairvoyance be attained, the qualities in question may take an evil instead of a good direction. A person may become intolerant, timid, or contentious toward his environment; may, for instance, acquire some feeling for the sentiments of others, and for this reason shun them or hate them. This may even reach the point where, by reason of the inner coldness that overwhelms him when he hears repugnant opinions, he is unable to listen, or he may behave in an objectionable manner.

The development of this organ may be accelerated if, in addition to all that has been stated, certain other injunctions are observed which can only be imparted to the student by word of mouth. Yet the instructions given above do actually lead to genuine esoteric training, and more-over, the regulation of life in the way described can be advantageous to all who cannot or will not undergo esoteric training. For it does not fail to produce an effect upon the organism of the soul, even though slowly. As regards the esoteric student, the observance of these principles is indispensable. Should he attempt esoteric training without conforming to them, this could only result in his entering the higher worlds with inadequate organs, and instead of perceiving the truth he would be subject to deceptions and illusions. He would attain a certain clairvoyance, but for the most part, be the victim of greater blindness than before. Formerly he at least stood firmly within the physical world; now he looks beyond this physical world and grows confused about it before acquiring a firm footing in a higher world. All power of distinguishing truth from error would then perhaps fail him, and he would entirely lose his way in life. It is just for this reason that patience is so necessary in these matters. It must ever be borne in mind that the instructions given in esoteric training may go no further than is compatible with the willing readiness shown to develop the lotus flowers to their regular shape. Should these flowers be brought to fruition before they have quietly attained their correct form, mere caricatures would be the result. Their maturity can be brought about by the special instructions given in esoteric training, but their form is dependent on the method of life described above.

An inner training of a particularly intimate character is necessary for the development of the ten-petalled lotus flower, for it is now a question of learning consciously to control and dominate the sense-impressions themselves. This is of particular importance in the initial stages of clairvoyance, for it is only by this means that a source of countless illusions and fancies is avoided. People as a rule do not realize by what factors their sudden ideas and memories are dominated, and how they are produced. Consider the following case. Someone is traveling by railway; his mind is busy with one thought; suddenly his thought diverges; he recollects an experience that befell him years ago and interweaves it with his present thought. He did not notice that in looking through the window he had caught sight of a person who resembled another intimately connected with the recollected experience. He remains conscious, not of what he saw, but of the effect it produced, and thus believes that it all came to him of its own accords. How much in life occurs in such a way! How great is the part played in our life by things we hear and learn, without our consciously realizing the connection! Someone, for instance, cannot

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bear a certain color, but does not realize that this is due to the fact that the schoolmaster who used to worry him many years ago wore a coat of that color. Innumerable illusions are based upon such associations.

Many things leave their mark upon the soul while remaining outside the pale of consciousness. The following may occur. Someone reads in the paper about the death of a well-known person, and forthwith claims to have had a presentiment of it yesterday, although he had neither heard nor seen anything that might have given rise to such a thought. And indeed it is quite true that the thought occurred to him yesterday, as though of its own accord, that this particular person would die; only one thing escaped his attention: two or three hours before this thought occurred to him yesterday, he went to visit an acquaintance; a newspaper lay on the table; he did not actually read it, but his eyes unconsciously fell on the announcement of the dangerous illness of the person in question. He remained unconscious of the impression he had received, and yet this impression resulted in his presentiment.

Reflection upon these matters will show how great is the source of illusion and fantasy contained in such associations. It is just this source which must be dammed up by all who seek to develop their ten-petalled lotus flower. Deeply hidden characteristics in other souls can be perceived by this organ, but their truth depends on the attainment of immunity from the above-mentioned illusions. For this purpose it is necessary that the student should control and dominate everything that seeks to influence him from outside. He should reach the point of really receiving no impressions beyond those he wishes to receive. This can only be achieved by the development of a powerful inner life; by an effort of the will he only allows such things to impress him to which his attention is directed, and he actually evades all impressions to which he does not voluntarily respond. If he sees something it is because he wills to see it, and if he does not voluntarily take notice of something it is actually non-existent for him. The greater the energy and inner activity devoted to this work, the more extensively will this faculty be attained.

The student must avoid all vacuous gazing and mechanical listening. For him only those things exist to which he turns his eye or his ear. He must practice the power of hearing nothing, even in the greatest disturbance, if he does not will to hear; and he must make his eyes unimpressible to things of which he does not particularly take notice. He must be shielded as by an inner armor against all unconscious impressions. In this connection the student must devote special care to his thought-life. He singles out a particular thought and endeavors to link with it only such other thoughts as he can himself consciously and voluntarily produce. He rejects all casual ideas and does not connect this thought with another until he has investigated the origin of the latter. He goes still further. If, for instance, he feels a particular antipathy for something, he will combat it and endeavor to establish a conscious relation between himself and the thing in question. In this way the unconscious elements that intrude into his soul will become fewer and fewer. Only by such severe self-discipline can the ten-petalled lotus flower attain its proper form. The student's inner life must become a life of attention, and he must learn really to hold at a distance everything to which he should not or does not wish to direct his attention.

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If this strict self-discipline be accompanied by meditation as prescribed in esoteric training, the lotus flower in the region of the pit of the stomach comes to maturity in the right way, and light and color of a spiritual kind are now added to the form and warmth perceptible to the organs described above. The talents and faculties of other beings are thereby revealed, also the forces and the hidden attributes of nature. The colored aura of living creatures then becomes visible; all that is around us manifests its spiritual attributes. It must be understood that the very greatest care is necessary at this stage of development, for the play of unconscious memories is here exceedingly active. If this were not the case, many people would possess this inner sense, for it comes almost immediately into evidence when the impressions delivered by the outer senses are held so completely under control that they become dependent on nothing save attention or inattention. This inner sense remains ineffective as long as the powerful outer sense smother and benumb it.

Still greater difficulty attends the development of the six-petalled lotus flower situated in the center of the body, for it can only be achieved as the result of complete mastery and control of the whole personality through consciousness of self, so that body, soul and spirit form one harmonious whole. The functions of the body, the inclinations and passions of the soul, the thoughts and ideas of the spirit must be tuned to perfect unison. The body must be so ennobled and purified that its organs incite to nothing that is not in the service of soul and spirit. The soul must not be impelled through the body to lusts and passions which are antagonistic to pure and noble thought. Yet the spirit must not stand like a slave-driver over the soul, dominating it with laws and commandments; the soul must rather learn to obey these laws and duties out of its own free inclination. The student must not feel duty to be an oppressive power to which he unwillingly submits, but rather something which he performs out of love. His task is to develop a free soul that maintains equilibrium between body and spirit, and he must perfect himself in this way to the extent of being free to abandon himself to the functions of the senses, for these should be so purified that they lose the power to drag him down to their level. He must no longer require to curb his passions, in as much as they of their own accord follow the good.

So long as self-chastisement is necessary, no one can pass a certain stage of esoteric development; for a virtue practiced under constraint is futile. If there is any lust remaining, it interferes with esoteric development, however great the effort made not to humor it. Nor does it matter whether this desire proceeds from the soul or the body. For example, if a certain stimulant be avoided for the purpose of self-purification, this deprivation will only prove helpful if the body suffers no harm from it. Should the contrary to be the case, this proves that the body craves the stimulant, and that abstinence from it is of no value. In this case it may actually be a question of renouncing the ideal to be attained, until more favorable physical conditions, perhaps in another life, shall be forthcoming. A wise renunciation may be a far greater achievement than the struggle for something which, under given conditions, remains unattainable. Indeed, a renunciation of this kind contributes more toward development than the opposite course.

The six-petalled lotus flower, when developed, permits intercourse with beings

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of higher worlds, though only when their existence is manifested in the astral or soul-world. The development of this lotus flower, however, is not advisable unless the student has made great progress on that path of esoteric development which enables him to raise his spirit into a still higher world. This entry into the spiritual world proper must always run parallel with the development of the lotus flowers, otherwise the student will fall into error and confusion. He would undoubtedly be able to see, but he would remain incapable of forming a correct estimate of what he saw. Now, the development of the six-petalled lotus flower itself provides a certain security against confusion and instability, for no one can be easily confused who has attained perfect equilibrium between sense (or body), passion (or soul), and idea (or spirit). And yet, something more than this security is required when, through the development of the six-petalled lotus flower, living beings of independent existence are revealed to his spirit, beings belonging to a world so completely different from the world known to his physical senses. The development of the lotus flowers alone does not assure sufficient security in these higher worlds; still higher organs are necessary. The latter will now be described before the remaining lotus flowers and the further organization of the soul-body are discussed. (This expression—soul-body—although obviously contradictory when taken literally, is used because to clairvoyant perception the impression received spiritually corresponds to the impression received physically when the physical body is perceived.)

The development of the soul-body in the manner described above permits perception in a supersensible world, but anyone wishing to find his way in this world must not remain stationary at this stage of development. The mere mobility of the lotus flowers is not sufficient. The student must acquire the power of regulating and controlling the movement of his spiritual organs independently and with complete consciousness; otherwise he would become a plaything for external forces and powers. To avoid this he must acquire the faculty of hearing what is called the inner world, and this involves the development not only of the soul-body but also of the etheric body. The latter is that tenuous body revealed to the clairvoyant as a kind of double of the physical body, and forms to a certain extent an intermediate step between the soul nature and the physical body. (See the description on the author's book *Theosophy*.) It is possible for one equipped with clairvoyant powers consciously to suggest away the physical body of a person.

This corresponds on a higher plane to an exercise in attentiveness on a lower plane. Just as a person can divert his attention from something in front of him so that it becomes non-existent for him, the clairvoyant can extinguish a physical body from his field of observation so that it becomes physically transparent to him. If he exerts this faculty in the case of some person standing before him, there remains visible to his clairvoyant sight only the etheric body, besides the soul-body which is larger than the other two—etheric and physical bodies—and interpenetrates them both. The etheric body has approximately the size and form of the physical body, so that it practically fills the same space. It is an extremely delicate and finely organized structure. (I beg the physicist not to be disturbed at the expression "etheric body". The word ether here is merely used to suggest the fineness of the body in question, and need not in any way be connected with the hypothetical ether of physics.)

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Its ground-color is different from any of the seven colors contained in the rainbow. Anyone capable of observing it will find a color which is actually non-existent for sense perception but to which the color of the young peach-blossom may be comparable. If desired, the etheric body can be examined alone; for this purpose the soul-body must be extinguished by an effort of attentiveness in the manner described above. Otherwise the etheric body will present an ever changing picture owing to its interpenetration by the soul-body.

Now, the particles of the etheric body are in continual motion. Countless currents stream through it in every direction. By these currents, life itself is maintained and regulated. Every body that has life, including animals and plants, possesses an etheric body. Even in minerals traces of it can be observed. These currents and movements are, to begin with, independent of human will and consciousness, just as the action of the heart or stomach is beyond our jurisdiction, and this independence remains unaltered so long as we do not take our development in hand in the sense of acquiring supersensible faculties. For, at a certain stage, development consists precisely in adding to the unconscious currents and movements of the etheric body others that are consciously produced and controlled.

When esoteric development has progressed so far that the lotus flowers begin to stir, much has already been achieved by the student which can result in the formation of certain quite definite currents and movements in his etheric body. The object of this development is the formation of a kind of center in the region of the physical heart, from which radiate currents and movements in the greatest possible variety of colors and forms. The center is in reality not a mere point, but a most complicated structure, a most wonderful organ. It glows and shimmers with every shade of color and displays forms of great symmetry, capable of rapid transformation. Other forms and streams of color radiate from this organ to the other parts of the body, and beyond it to the astral body, completely penetrating and illuminating it. The most important of these currents flow to the lotus flowers. They permeate each petal and regulate its revolutions; then streaming out at the points of the petals, they lose themselves in outer space. The higher the development of a person, the greater the circumference to which these rays extend.

The twelve-petalled lotus flower has a particularly close connection with this central organ. The currents flow directly into it and through it, proceeding on the one side to the sixteen and the two-petalled lotus flowers, and on the other, the lower side, to the flowers of eight, six and four petals. It is for this reason that the very greatest care must be devoted to the development of the twelve-petalled lotus, for an imperfection in the latter would result in irregular formation of the whole structure. The above will give an idea of the delicate and intimate nature of esoteric training, and of the accuracy needed if the development is to be regular and correct. It will also be evident beyond doubt that directions for the development of supersensible faculties can only be the concern of those who have themselves experienced everything which they propose to awaken in others, and who are unquestionably in a position to know whether the directions they give lead to the exact results desired. If the student follows the directions that have been given him, he introduces into his etheric body currents and movements which are in

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harmony with the laws and the evolution of the world to which he belongs. Consequently these instructions are reflections of the great laws of cosmic evolution. They consist of the above-mentioned and similar exercises in meditation and concentration which, if correctly practiced, produce the results described. The student must at certain times let these instructions permeate his soul with their content, so that he is inwardly entirely filled with it.

A simple start is made with a view to the deepening of the logical activity of the mind and the producing of an inward intensification of thought. Thought is thereby made free and independent of all sense impressions and experiences; it is concentrated in one point which is held entirely under control. Thus a preliminary center is formed for the currents of the etheric body. This center is not yet in the region of the heart but in the head, and it appears to the clairvoyant as the point of departure for movements and currents. No esoteric training can be successful which does not first create this center. If the latter were first formed in the region of the heart the aspiring clairvoyant would doubtless obtain glimpses of the higher worlds, but would lack all true insight into the connection between these higher worlds and the world of our senses. This, however, is an unconditional necessity for man at the present stage of evolution. The clairvoyant must not become a visionary; he must retain a firm footing upon the earth.

The center in the head, once duly fixed, is then moved lower down, to the region of the larynx. This is effected by further exercises in concentration. Then the currents of the etheric body radiate from this point and illumine the astral space surrounding the individual.

Continued practice enables the student to determine for himself the position of this etheric body. Hitherto this position depended upon external forces proceeding from the physical body. Through further development the student is able to turn his etheric body to all sides. This faculty is effected by currents moving approximately along both hands and centered in the two-petalled lotus in the region of the eyes. All this is made possible through the radiations from the larynx assuming round forms, of which a number flow to the two-petalled lotus and thence form undulating currents along the hands. As a further development, these currents branch out and ramify in the most delicate manner and become, as it were, a kind of web which then encompasses the entire etheric body as though with a network. Whereas hitherto the etheric body was not closed to the outer world, so that the life currents from the universal ocean of life flowed freely in and out, these currents now have to pass through this membrane. Thus the individual becomes sensitive to these external streams; they become perceptible to him.

And now the time has come to give the complete system of currents and movements its center situated in the region of the heart. This again is effected by persevering with the exercises in concentration and meditation; and at this point also the stage is reached when the student becomes gifted with the inner word. All things now acquire a new significance for him. They become as it were spiritually audible in their innermost self, and speak to him of their essential being. The currents described above place him in touch with the inner being of the world to which he belongs. He begins to mingle his life with the life of his environment and can let it reverberate in the movements of his

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lotus flowers.

At this point the spiritual world is entered. If the student has advanced so far, he acquires a new understanding for all that the great teachers of humanity have uttered. The sayings of the Buddha and the Gospels, for instance, produce a new effect on him. They pervade him with a rapture of which he had not dreamed before. For the tone of their words follows the movements and rhythms which he has himself formed within himself. He can now have positive knowledge that a Buddha or the Evangelists did not utter their own revelations but those which flowed into them from the inmost being of all things. A fact must here be pointed out which can only be understood in the light of what has been said above. The many repetitions in the sayings of the Buddha are not comprehensible to people of our present evolutionary stage. For the esoteric student, however, they become a force on which he gladly lets his inner senses rest, for they correspond with certain movements in the etheric body. Devotional surrender to them, with perfect inner peace, creates an inner harmony with these movements; and because the latter are an image of certain cosmic rhythms which also at certain points repeat themselves and revert to former modes, the student listening to the wisdom of the Buddha unites his life with that of the cosmic mysteries.

In esoteric training there is question of four attributes which must be acquired on the so-called preparatory path for the attainment of higher knowledge. The first is the faculty of discriminating in thoughts between truth and appearance or mere opinion. The second attribute is the correct estimation of what is inwardly true and real, as against what is merely apparent. The third rests in the practice of the six qualities already mentioned in the preceding pages: thought-control, control of actions, perseverance, tolerance, faith and equanimity. The fourth attribute is the love of inner freedom.

A mere intellectual understanding of what is included in these attributes is of no value. They must be so incorporated into the soul that they form the basis of inner habits. Consider, for instance, the first of these attributes: The discrimination between truth and appearance. The student must so train himself that, as a matter of course, he distinguishes in everything that confronts him between the non-essential elements and those that are significant and essential. He will only succeed in this if, in his observation of the outer world, he quietly and patiently ever and again repeats the attempt. And at the end he will naturally single out the essential and the true at a glance, whereas formerly the non-essential, the transient, too, could content him. "All that is transient is but a seeming" [**] is a truth which becomes an unquestionable conviction of the soul. The same applies to the remaining three of the four attributes mentioned.

Now these four inner habits do actually produce a transformation of the delicate human etheric body. By the first, discrimination between truth and appearance, the center in the head already described is formed and the center in the region of the larynx prepared. The actual development of these centers is of course dependent on the exercises in concentration described above; the latter make for development and the four attributes bring to fruition. Once the center in the larynx has been prepared, the free control of the etheric body and its enclosure within a network covering, as explained above, results from the correct estimation of what is true as against what is apparent and

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non-essential. If the student acquires this faculty of estimation, the facts of the higher worlds will gradually become perceptible to him. But he must not think that he has to perform only such actions which appear significant when judged by the standard of a mere intellectual estimate. The most trifling action, every little thing accomplished, has something of importance in the great cosmic household, and it is merely a question of being aware of this importance.

A correct estimation of the affairs of daily life is required, not an underestimation of them. The six virtues of which the third attribute consists have already been dealt with; they are connected with the development of the twelve-petalled lotus in the region of the heart, and, as already indicated, it is to this center that the life-currents of the etheric body must be directed. The fourth attribute, the longing for liberation, serves to bring to fruition the etheric organ in the heart region. Once this attribute becomes an inner habit, the individual frees himself from everything which depends only upon the faculties of his own personal nature. He ceases to view things from his own separate standpoint, and the boundaries of his own narrow self fettering him to this point of view disappear. The secrets of the spiritual world gain access to his inner self. This is liberation. For those fetters constrain the individual to regard things and beings in a manner corresponding to his own personal traits. It is from this personal manner of regarding things that the student must become liberated and free.

It will be clear from the above that the instructions given in esoteric training exert a determining influence reaching the innermost depths of human nature. Such are the instructions regarding the four qualities mentioned above. They can be found in one form or another in all the great cosmogonies that take account of the spiritual world. The founders of the great cosmogonies did not give mankind these teachings from some vague feeling. They gave them for the good reason that they were great initiates. Out of their knowledge did they shape their moral teachings. They knew how these would act upon the finer nature of man, and desired that their followers should gradually achieve the development of this finer nature. To live in the sense of these great cosmogonies means to work for the attainment of personal spiritual perfection. Only by so doing can man become a servant of the world and of humanity. Self-perfection is by no means self-seeking, for the imperfect man is an imperfect servant of the world and of humanity. The more perfect a man is, the better does he serve the world. "If the rose adorns itself, it adorns the garden."

The founders of the great cosmogonies are therefore the great initiates. Their teaching flows into the soul of men, and thus, with humanity, the whole world moves forward. Quite consciously did they work to further this evolutionary process of humanity. Their teachings can only be understood if it be remembered that they are the product of knowledge of the innermost depths of human nature. The great initiates knew, and it is out of their knowledge that they shaped the ideals of humanity. And man approaches these great leaders when he uplifts himself, in his own development, to their heights.

A completely new life opens out before the student when the development of his etheric body begins in the way described above, and at the proper time, in the course of his training, he must receive that enlightenment which enables him to adapt himself to

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this new existence. The sixteen-petalled lotus, for instance, enables him to perceive spiritual figures of a higher world. He must learn now how different these figures can be when caused by different objects or beings. In the first place, he must notice that his own thoughts and feelings exert a powerful influence on certain of these figures, on others little or no influence. One kind of figure alters immediately if the observer, upon seeing it, says to himself: "that is beautiful," and then in the course of his observation changes this thought to: "that is useful." It is characteristic of the forms proceeding from minerals or from artificial objects that they change under the influence of every thought and every feeling directed upon them by the observer.

This applies in a lesser degree to the forms belonging to plants, and still less to those corresponding to animals. These figures, too, are full of life and motion, but this motion is only partially due to the influence of human thoughts and feelings; in other respects it is produced by causes which are beyond human influence. Now, there appears within this whole world a species of form which remains almost entirely unaffected by human influence. The student can convince himself that these forms proceed neither from minerals nor from artificial objects, nor, again, from plants or animals. To gain complete understanding, he must study those forms which he can realize to have proceeded from the feelings, instincts, and passions of human beings. Yet he can find that these forms too are influenced by his own thoughts and feelings, if only to a relatively small extent.

But there always remains a residuum of forms in this world upon which such influences are negligible. Indeed, at the outset of this career the student can perceive little beyond this residuum. He can only discover its nature by observing himself. He then learns what forms he himself produces, for his will, his wishes, and so on, are expressed in these forms. An instinct that dwells in him, a desire that fills him, an intention that he harbors, and so forth, are all manifested in these forms: his whole character displays itself in this world of forms. Thus by his conscious thoughts and feelings a person can exercise an influence on all forms which do not proceed from himself; but over those which he brings about in the higher world, once he has created them. Now, it follows from what has been said that on this higher plan man's inner life of instincts, desires, ideas displays itself outwardly in definite forms, just like all the other beings and objects. To higher knowledge, the inner world appears as part of the outer world. In a higher world man's inner being confronts him as a reflected image, just as though in the physical world he were surrounded by mirrors and could observe his physical body in that way.

At this stage of development the student has reached the point where he can free himself from the illusion resulting from the initiation of his personal self. He can now observe that inner self as outer world, just as he hitherto regarded as outer world everything that affected his senses. Thus he learns by gradual experience to deal with himself as hitherto he dealt with the beings around him.

Were the student to obtain an insight into these spiritual worlds without sufficient preparation regarding their nature, he would find himself confronted by the picture of his own soul as though by an enigma. There his own desires and passions confront him in

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animal or, more rarely, in human forms. It is true that animal forms of this world are never quite similar to those of the physical world, yet they possess a remote resemblance: inexperienced observers often take them to be identical. Now, upon entering this world, an entirely new method of judgment must be acquired; for apart from the fact that things actually pertaining to inner nature appear as outer world, they also bear the character of mirrored reflections of what they really are. When, for instance, a number is perceived, it must be read in reverse, as a picture in a mirror: 265 would mean here in reality, 562. A sphere is perceived as thought from its center. This inner perception must then be translated in the right way. The qualities of the soul appear likewise as in a mirror. A wish directed toward an outer object appears as a form moving toward the person wishing. Passions residing in the lower part of human nature can assume animal forms or similar shapes that hurl themselves against the individual. In reality, these passions are headed outward; they seek satisfaction in the outer world, but this striving outward appears in the mirrored reflection as an attack on the individual from whom they proceed.

If the student, before attaining insight into higher worlds, has learned by quiet and sincere self-observation to realize the qualities and the defects of his own character, he will then, at the moment when his own inner self confronts him as a mirrored image, find strength and courage to conduct himself in the right way. People who have failed to test themselves in this way, and are insufficiently acquainted with their own inner self, will not recognize themselves in their own mirrored image and will mistake it for an alien reality. Or they may become alarmed at the vision and, because they cannot endure the sight, deceive themselves into believing the whole thing is nothing but an illusion which cannot lead them anywhere. In either case the person in question, through prematurely attaining a certain stage of inner development, would fatally obstruct his own progress.

It is absolutely necessary that the student should experience this spiritual aspect of his own inner self before progressing to higher spheres; for his own self constitutes that psycho-spiritual element of which he is the best judge. If he has thoroughly realized the nature of his own personality in the physical world, and if the image of his personality first appears to him in a higher world, he is then able to compare the one with the other. He can refer the higher to something already known to him, so that his point of departure is on firm ground. Whereas, no matter how many other spiritual beings appeared to him, he would find himself unable to discover their nature and qualities, and would soon feel the ground giving way beneath him. Thus it cannot be too often repeated that the only safe entrance into the higher worlds is at the end of a path leading through a genuine knowledge and estimate of one's own nature.

Pictures, then, of a spiritual kind are first encountered by the student on his progress into higher worlds; and the reality to which these pictures correspond is actually within himself. He should be far enough advanced to refrain from desiring reality of a more robust kind at this initial stage, and to regard these pictures as timely. He will soon meet something quite new within this world of pictures. His lower self is before him as a mirrored image; but from within this image there appears the true reality of his higher self. Out of the picture of his lower personality the form of the spiritual ego be-

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comes visible. Then threads are spun from the latter to other and higher spiritual realities.

This is the moment when the two-petalled lotus in the region of the eyes is required. If it now begins to stir, the student finds it possible to bring his higher ego in contact with higher spiritual beings. The currents from this lotus flower flow toward the higher realities in such a way that the movements in question are fully apparent to the individual. Just as the light renders the physical objects visible, so, too, these currents disclose spiritual beings of higher worlds.

Through inward application to the fundamental truths derived from spiritual science the student learns to set in motion and then to direct the currents proceeding from the lotus flower between the eyes.

It is at this stage of development especially that the value of sound judgment and a training in clear and logical thought come to the fore. The higher self, which hitherto slumbered unconsciously in an embryonic state, is now born into conscious existence. This is not a figurative but a positive birth in the spiritual world, and the being now born, the higher self, must enter that world with all the necessary organs and aptitudes if it is to be capable of life. Just as nature must provide for a child being born into the world with suitable eyes and ears, so, too, the laws of self-development must provide for the necessary capacities with which the higher self can enter existence. These laws governing the development of the higher spiritual organs are none other than the laws of sound reason and morality of the physical world. The spiritual self matures in the physical self as a child in the mother's womb. The child's health depends upon the normal functioning of natural laws in the maternal womb.

The constitution of the spiritual self is similarly conditioned by the laws of common intelligence and reason that govern physical life. No one can give birth to a soundly constituted higher self whose life in thought and feeling, in the physical world, is not sound and healthy. Natural, rational life is the basis of all genuine spiritual development. Just as the child when still in the maternal womb lives in accordance with the natural forces to which it has access, after its birth, through its organs of sense, so, too, the human higher self lives in accordance with the laws of the spiritual world, even during physical existence. And even as the child, out of a dim life instinct, acquires the requisite forces, so, too, can man acquire the powers of the spiritual world before his higher self is born. Indeed, he must do this if the latter is to enter the world as a fully developed being.

It would be quite wrong for anyone to say: "I cannot accept the teachings of spiritual science until I myself become a seer," for without inward application to the results of spiritual research there is no chance whatever of attaining genuine higher knowledge. It would be as though a child, during gestation, were to refuse the forces coming to it through its mother, and proposed to wait until it could procure them for itself. Just as the embryonic child in its incipient feeling for life learns to appreciate what is offered to it, so can the non-seer appreciate the truth of the teachings of spiritual science. An insight into these teachings based on a deeply rooted feeling for truth, and a clear, sound, all-around

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critical and reasoning faculty are possible even before spiritual things are actually perceived. The esoteric knowledge must first be studied, so that this study becomes a preparation for clairvoyance. A person attaining clairvoyance without such preparation would resemble a child born with eyes and ears but without a brain. The entire world of sound and color would display itself before him, but he would be helpless in it.

At this stage of his esoteric development the student realizes, through personal inward experience, all that had previously appealed to his sense of truth, to his intellect and reason. He has now direct knowledge of his higher self. He learns how his higher self is connected with exalted spiritual beings and forms with them a united whole. He sees how the lower self originates in a higher world, and it is revealed to him how his higher nature outlasts his lower. He can now distinguish the imperishable in himself from the perishable; that is, he learns through personal insight to understand the doctrine of the incarnation of the higher self in the lower. It will become plain to him that he is part of a great spiritual complex and that his qualities and destiny are due to this connection. He learns to recognize the law of his life, his karma. He realizes that his lower self, constituting his present existence, is only one of the forms which his higher being can adopt. He discerns the possibility of working down from his higher self in his lower self, so that he may perfect himself ever more and more. Now, too, he can comprehend the great differences between human beings in regard to their level of perfection. He becomes aware that there are others above him who have already traversed the stages which still lie before him, and he realizes that the teachings and deeds of such men proceed from the inspiration of a higher world. He owes this knowledge to his first personal glimpse into this higher world. The so-called initiates of humanity now become vested with reality for him.

These, then, are the gifts which the student owes to his development at this stage: insight into his higher self; insight into the doctrine of the incarnation of this higher being in a lower; insight into the laws by which life in the physical world is regulated according to its spiritual connections, that is, the law of karma; and finally, insight into the existence of the great initiates.

Thus it is said of a student who has reached this stage, that all doubt has vanished from him. His former faith, based on reason and sound thoughts, is now replaced by knowledge and insight which nothing can undermine. The various religions have presented, in their ceremonies, sacraments, and rites, externally visible patterns of the higher spiritual beings and events. None but those who have not penetrated to the depths of the great religions can fail to recognize this fact. Personal insight into spiritual reality explains the great significance of these externally visible cults. Religious service, then, becomes for the seer an image of his own communion with the higher, spiritual world.

It has been shown how the student, by attaining this stage, becomes in truth a new being. He can now mature to still higher faculties and, by means of the life-currents of his etheric body, control the higher and actual life-element, thus attaining a high degree of independence from the restrictions of the physical body.

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VI

THE TRANSFORMATION OF DREAM LIFE

AN INTIMATION that the student has reached or will soon reach the stage of development described in the preceding chapter will be found in the change which comes over his dream life. His dreams, hitherto confused and haphazard, now begin to assume a more regular character. Their pictures begin to succeed each other in sensible connection, like the thoughts and ideas of daily life. He can discern in them law, cause, and effect. The content, too, of his dreams is changed. While hitherto he discerned only reminiscences of daily life and transformed impressions of his surroundings or of his physical condition, there now appear before him pictures of a world he has hitherto not known. At first the general character of his dream life remains unchanged, in as far as dreams are distinguished from waking mental activity by the symbolical presentation of what they wish to express.

No attentive observer of dream life can fail to detect this characteristic. For instance, a person may dream that he has caught some horrible creature, and he feels an unpleasant sensation in his hand. He wakes to discover that he is tightly grasping a corner of the blanket. The truth is not presented to the mind, except through the medium of a symbolical image. A man may dream that he is flying from some pursuer and is stricken with fear. On waking, he finds that he has been suffering, during sleep, from palpitations of the heart. Disquieting dreams can also be traced to indigestible food. Occurrences in the immediate vicinity may also reflect themselves symbolically in dreams. The striking of a clock may evoke the picture of a troop of soldiers marching by to the beat of drums. A falling chair may be the occasion of a whole dream drama in which the sound of the fall is reproduced as the report of a gun, and so forth. The more regulated dreams of esoteric students whose etheric body has begun its development retain this symbolical method of expression, but they will cease merely to reflect reality connected with the physical body and physical environment. As the dreams due to the latter causes become more connected, they are mingled with similar pictures expressing things and events of another world. These are the first experiences lying beyond the range of waking consciousness.

Yet no true mystic will ever make his experiences in dreams the basis of any authoritative account of the higher world. Such dreams must be merely considered as providing the first hint of a higher development. Very soon and as a further result, the

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student's dreams will no longer remain beyond the reach of intellectual guidance as heretofore, but on the contrary, will be mentally controlled and supervised like the impressions and conceptions of waking consciousness. The difference between dream and waking consciousness grows ever smaller. The dreamer remains awake in the fullest sense of the word during his dream life; that is, he is aware of his mastery and control over his own vivid mental activity.

During our dreams we are actually in a world other than that of our senses; but with undeveloped spiritual organs we can form none other than the confused conceptions of it described above. It is only in so far present for us as, for instance, the world of sense could be for a being equipped with no more than rudimentary eyes. That is why we can see nothing in this world but counterfeits and reflections of daily life. The latter are perceptible to us because our own soul paints its daily experiences in pictorial form into the substance of which that other world consists. It must be clearly understood that in addition to our ordinary conscious work-a-day life we lead a second, unconscious life in that other world. We engrave in it all our thoughts and perceptions. These tracings only become visible when the lotus flowers are developed. Now, in every human being there are slender rudiments of these lotus flowers. We cannot perceive by means of them during waking consciousness because the impressions made on them are very faint. We cannot see the stars during the daytime for a similar reason: their visibility is extinguished by the mighty glare of the sun. Thus, too, the faint spiritual impressions cannot make themselves felt in the face of the powerful impressions received through the senses.

Now, when the gate of the senses is closed during sleep, these other impressions begin to emerge confusedly, and the dreamer becomes aware of experiences in another world. But as already explained, these experiences consist at first merely of pictures engraved in the spiritual world by our mental activity attached to the physical senses. Only developed lotus flowers make it possible for manifestations not derived from the physical world to be imprinted in the same way. And then the etheric body, when developed, brings full knowledge concerning these engraved impressions derived from other worlds.

This is the beginning of life and activity in a new world, and at this point esoteric training must set the student a twofold task. To begin with, he must learn to take stock of everything he observes in his dreams, exactly as though he were awake. Then, if successful in this, he is led to make the same observations during ordinary waking consciousness. He will so train his attention and receptivity for these spiritual impressions that they need no longer vanish in the face of the physical impressions, but will always be at hand for him and reach him in addition to the others.

When the student has acquired this faculty there arises before his spiritual eyes something of the picture described in the preceding chapter, and he can henceforth discern all that the spiritual world contains as the cause of the physical world. Above all things he can perceive and gain knowledge of his own higher self in this world. The next task now confronting him is to grow, as it were, into this higher self, that is, really to regard it as his own true self and to act accordingly. He realizes ever more clearly and

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intensely that his physical body and what he hitherto called his "I" are merely the instruments of his higher self. He adopts an attitude toward his lower self such as a person limited to the world of the senses adopts toward some instrument or vehicle that serves him. No one includes as part of himself the vehicle in which he is traveling, even though he says: "I travel"; so, too, when an inwardly developed person says: "I go through the door," his actual conception is: "I carry my body through the door." Only this must become a natural concept for him, so that he never for a moment loses his firm footing in the physical world, or feels estranged from it. If the student is to avoid becoming a fantastic visionary he must not impoverish his life through his higher consciousness, but on the contrary, enrich it, as a person enriches his life by using the railway and not merely his legs to cover a certain distance.

When the student has thus raised himself to a life in the higher ego, or rather during his acquisition of the higher consciousness, he will learn how to stir to life the spiritual perceptive force in the organ of the heart and control it through the currents described in the foregoing chapter. This perceptive force is an element of higher sustainability, which proceeds from the organ in question and flows with beautiful radiance through the moving lotus flowers and the other channels of the developed etheric body. Thence it radiates outward into the surrounding spiritual world rendering it spiritually visible, just as the sunlight falling on the objects of the physical world renders them visible.

How this perceptive force in the heart organ is created can only be gradually understood in the course of actual development.

It is only when this organ of perception can be sent through the etheric body and into the outer world, to illumine the objects there, that the actual spiritual world, as composed of objects and beings, can be clearly perceived. Thus it will be seen that complete consciousness of an object in the spiritual world is only possible when man himself casts upon it the spiritual light. Now, the ego which creates this organ of perception does not dwell within, but outside the physical body, as already shown. The heart organ is only the spot where the individual man kindles, from without, this spiritual light organ. Were the latter kindled elsewhere, the spiritual perceptions produced by it would have no connection with the physical world. But all higher spiritual realities must be related to the physical world, and man himself must act as a channel through which they flow into it. It is precisely through the heart organ that the higher ego governs the physical self, making it into its instrument.

Now, the feelings of an esoterically developed person toward the things of the spiritual world are very different from the feelings of the undeveloped person toward the things of the physical world. The latter feels himself to be at a particular place in the world of sense, and the surrounding objects to be external to him. The spiritually developed person feels himself to be united with, and as though in the interior of, the spiritual objects he perceives. He wanders, in fact, from place to place in spiritual space, and is therefore called the wanderer in the language of occult science. He has no home at first. Should he, however, remain a mere wanderer he would be unable to define any object in spiritual space. Just as objects and places in physical space are defined from a fixed

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point of departure, this, too, must be the case in the other world. He must seek out some place, thoroughly investigate it, and take spiritual possession of it. In this place he must establish his spiritual home and relate everything else to it. In physical life, too, a person sees everything in terms of his physical home. Natives of Berlin and Paris will involuntarily describe London in a different way. And yet there is a difference between the spiritual and the physical home. We are born into the latter without our co-operation and instinctively absorb, during our childhood, a number of ideas by which everything is henceforth involuntarily colored. The student, however, himself founds his own spiritual home in full consciousness. His judgment, therefore, based on this spiritual home, is formed in the light of freedom. This founding of a spiritual home is called in the language of occult science the building of the hut.

Spiritual vision at this stage extends to the spiritual counterparts of the physical world, so far as these exist in the so-called astral world. There everything is found which in its nature is similar to human instincts, feelings, desires, and passions. For powers related to all these human characteristics are associated with all physical objects. A crystal, for instance, is cast in its form by powers which, seen from a higher standpoint, appear as an active human impulse. Similar forces drive the sap through the capillaries of the plant, cause the blossoms to unfold and the seed vessels to burst. To developed spiritual organs of perception all these forces appear gifted with form and color, just as the objects of the physical world have form and color for physical eyes. At this stage in his development the student sees not only the crystal and the plant, but also the spiritual forces mentioned above. Animal and human impulses are perceptible to him not only through their physical manifestation in the individual, but directly as objects; he perceives them just as he perceives tables and chairs in the physical world. The whole range of instincts, impulses, desires and passions, both of an animal and of a human being, constitute the astral cloud or aura in which the being is enveloped.

Furthermore, the clairvoyant can at this stage perceive things which are almost or entirely withheld from the senses. He can, for instance, tell the astral difference between a room full of low or of high-minded people. Not only the physical but also the spiritual atmosphere of a hospital differs from that of a ballroom. A commercial town has a different astral air from that of a university town. In the initial stages of clairvoyance this perceptive faculty is but slightly developed; its relation to the objects in question is similar to the relation of dream consciousness to waking consciousness in ordinary life; it will, however, become fully awakened at this stage as well.

The highest achievement of a clairvoyant who has attained the degree of vision described above is that in which the astral counter-effects of animal and human impulses and passions are revealed to him. A loving action is accompanied by quite a different astral concomitant from one inspired by hate. Senseless desire gives rise to an ugly astral counterpart, while a feeling evoked by a high ideal creates one that is beautiful. These astral images are but faintly perceptible during physical life, for their strength is diminished by life in the physical world. The desire for an object, for example, produces a counterpart of this sort in addition to the semblance of the desire itself in the astral world. If, however, the object be attained and the desire satisfied, or if, at any rate, the

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possibility of satisfaction is forthcoming, the corresponding image will show but faintly.

It only attains its full force after the death of the individual human being, when the soul in accordance with her nature still harbors such desires, but can no longer satisfy them, because the object and the physical organ are both lacking. The gourmand, for instance, will still retain, after death, the desire to please his palate; but there is no possibility of satisfying this desire because he no longer has a palate. As a result, the desire produces an especially powerful counterpart, by which the soul is tormented. These experiences evoked by the counterparts of the lower soul-nature after death are called the experiences in the soul-world, especially in the region of desires. They only vanish when the soul has purified herself from all desires inclining toward the physical world. Then only does the soul mount to the higher regions, to the world of spirit. Even though these images are faint during life in the physical world, they are none the less present, following man as his world of desire, in the way a comet is followed by its tail. They can be seen by a clairvoyant at the requisite stage of development.

Such and similar experiences fill the life of the student during the period described above. He cannot attain higher spiritual experience at this stage of development, but must climb still higher from this point.

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VII

THE CONTINUITY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

HUMAN life runs its course in three alternating states or conditions, namely, waking, dreaming sleep, and dreamless sleep. The attainment of the higher knowledge of spiritual worlds can be readily understood if a conception be formed of the changes occurring in these three conditions, as experienced by one seeking such higher knowledge. When no training has been undertaken to attain this knowledge, human consciousness is continually interrupted by the restful interval of sleep. During these intervals the soul knows nothing of the outer world, and equally little of itself. Only at certain periods dreams emerge from the deep ocean of insensibility, dreams linked to the occurrences of the outer world or the conditions of the physical body. At first, dreams are only regarded as a particular manifestation of sleep-life, and thus only two states are generally spoken of, namely, sleeping and waking.

For spiritual science, however, dreams have an independent significance apart from the other two conditions. In the foregoing chapter a description was given of the alteration ensuing in the dream-life of the person undertaking the ascent to higher knowledge. His dreams lose their meaningless, irregular and disconnected character and form themselves more and more into a world of law and order. With continued development, not only does this new world born out of the dream world come to be in no way inferior to outer physical reality as regards its inner truth, but facts reveal themselves in it representing a higher reality in the fullest sense of the word. Secrets and riddles lie concealed everywhere in the physical world. In the latter, the effects are seen of certain higher facts, but no one can penetrate to the causes whose perception is confined merely to his senses.

These causes are partly revealed to the student in the condition described above and developed out of dream life, a condition, however, in which he by no means remains stationary. True, he must not regard these revelations as actual knowledge so long as the same things do not also reveal themselves during ordinary waking life. But in time he achieves this as well: he develops this faculty of carrying over into waking consciousness the condition he created for himself out of dream life. Thus something new is introduced into the world of his senses that enriches it. Just as a person born blind and successfully operated upon will recognize the surrounding objects as enriched by all that the eye perceives, to, too, will anyone having become clairvoyant in the above manner

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perceive the whole world surrounding him peopled with new qualities, things, beings, and so forth. He now need no longer wait for his dreams to live in another world, but he can at any suitable moment put himself into the above condition for the purpose of higher perception. This condition then acquires a significance for him similar to the perception, in ordinary life, of things with active senses as opposed to inactive senses. It can truly be said that the student opens the eyes of his soul and beholds things which necessarily remain concealed from the bodily senses.

Now this condition is only transitional to still higher stages of knowledge. If the student continues his esoteric exercises he will find, in due time, that the radical change, as described above, does not confine itself to his dream life, but that this transformation also extends to what was previously a condition of deep dreamless sleep. Isolated conscious experiences begin to interrupt the complete insensibility of this deep sleep. Perceptions previously unknown to him emerge from the pervading unknown to him emerge from the pervading darkness of sleep. It is, of course, not easy to describe these perceptions, for our language is only adapted to the physical world, and therefore only approximate terms can be found to express what does not at all belong to that world. Still, such terms must be used to describe the higher worlds, and this is only possible by the free use of simile; yet seeing that everything in the world is interrelated, the attempt may be made.

The things and beings of the higher worlds are closely enough related to those of the physical world to enable, with a little good will, some sort of conception of these higher worlds to be formed, even though words suitable for the physical world are used. Only the reader must always bear in mind that such descriptions of supersensible worlds must, to a large extent, be in the nature of simile and symbol. The words of ordinary language are only partially adopted in the course of esoteric training; for the rest, the student learns another symbolical language, as a natural outcome of his ascent to higher worlds. The knowledge of this language is acquired during esoteric training itself, but that does not preclude the possibility of learning something concerning the higher worlds even from such ordinary descriptions as those here given.

Some idea can be given of those experiences which emerge from the insensibility of deep sleep if they be compared to a kind of hearing. We may speak of perceptible tones and words. While the experiences during dreaming sleep may fitly be designated as a kind of vision, the facts observed during deep sleep may be compared to auricular impressions. (It should be remarked in passing that for the spiritual world, too, the faculty of sight remains the higher. There, too, colors are higher than sounds and words. The student's first perceptions in this world do not yet extend to the higher colors, but only to the lower tones. Only because man, according to his general development, is already more qualified for the world revealing itself in dreaming sleep does he at once perceive colors there. He is less qualified for the higher world unveiling itself in deep sleep; therefore the first revelations of it he receives are in tones and words; later on, he can here, too, ascend to colors and forms.)

Now, when these experiences during deep sleep first come to the notice of the student, his next task must be to sense them as clearly and vividly as possible. At first

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this presents great difficulty, the perception of these experiences being exceedingly slight. The student knows very well, on waking, that he has had an experience, but is completely in the dark as regards its nature. The most important thing during this initial stage is to remain quiet and composed, and not for a moment lapse into any unrest or impatience. The latter is under all circumstances detrimental; it can never accelerate development, but only delays it. The student must cultivate a quiet and yielding receptivity for the gift that is presented to him; all violence must be repressed. Should he at any period not become aware of experiences during sleep he must wait patiently until this is possible. Some day this moment will assuredly arrive. And this perceptive faculty, if awaited with patience and composure, remains a secure possession; while should it appear momentarily in answer to forcible methods, it may be completely lost for a long time.

Once this perceptive faculty is acquired and the experiences during sleep are present to the student's consciousness in complete lucidity and clarity, his attention should be directed to the following point. All these experiences are seen to consist of two kinds, which can be clearly distinguished. The first kind will be totally different from anything that he has ever experienced. These experiences may be a source of joy and edification, but otherwise they should be left to themselves for the time being. They are the first harbinger of higher spiritual worlds in which the student will find his way later on. In the other kind of experiences the attentive observer will discover a certain relationship with the ordinary world in which he lives. The subjects of his reflections during life, what he would like to understand in these things around him but cannot understand with the ordinary intellect, these are the things concerning which the experiences during sleep give him information.

During every-day life man reflects on his environment; his mind tries to conceive and understand the connection existing between things; he seeks to grasp in thought and idea what his senses perceive. It is to these ideas and concepts that the experiences during sleep refer. Obscure, shadowy concepts become sonorous and living in a way comparable only to the tones and the words of the physical world. It seems to the student ever more and more as though the solution of the riddles over which he ponders is whispered to him in tones and words out of a higher world. And he is able to connect with ordinary life whatever comes to him from a higher world. What was formerly only accessible to his thought now becomes actual experience, just as living and substantial as an experience in this physical world can be. The things and beings of this physical world are by no means only what they appear to be for physical perception. They are the expression and effluence of a spiritual world. This spiritual world, hitherto concealed from the student, now resounds for him out of his whole environment.

It is easy to see that this higher perceptive faculty can prove a blessing only if the opened soul-senses are in perfect order, just as the ordinary senses can only be used for a true observation of the world if their equipment is regular and normal. Now man himself forms these higher senses through the exercises indicated by spiritual science. The latter include concentration, in which the attention is directed to certain definite ideas and concepts connected with the secrets of the universe; and meditation, which is a life

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in such ideas, a complete submersion in them, in the right way. By concentration and meditation the student works upon his soul and develops within it the soul-organs of perception. While thus applying himself to the task of concentration and meditation his soul grows within his body, just as the embryo child grows in the body of the mother. When the isolated experiences during sleep begin, as described, the moment of birth is approaching for the liberated soul; for she has literally become a new being, developed by the individual within himself, from seed to fruit. The effort required for concentration and meditation must therefore be carefully and accurately maintained, for it contains the laws governing the germination and fruition of the higher human soul-being. The latter must appear at its birth as a harmonious, well-proportioned organism. Through an error in following the instructions, no such normal being will come to existence in the spiritual spheres, but a miscarriage incapable of life.

That this higher soul-being should be born during deep sleep will be easily grasped, for if that delicate organism lacking all power of resistance chanced to appear during physical every-day life it could not prevail against the harsh and powerful processes of this life. Its activity would be of no account against that of the body. During sleep, however, when the body rests in as far as its activity is dependent on sense perception, the activity of the higher soul, at first so delicate and inconspicuous, can come into evidence. Here again the student must bear in mind that these experiences during sleep may not be regarded as fully valid knowledge, so long as he is not in a position to carry over his awakened higher soul into waking consciousness as well. The acquisition of this faculty will enable him to perceive the spiritual world in its own character, among and within the experiences of the day; that is, the hidden secrets of his environment will be conveyed to his soul as tones and words.

Now, the student must realize at this stage of development that he is dealing with separate and more or less isolated spiritual experiences. He should therefore beware of constructing out of them a complete whole or even a connected system of knowledge. In this case, all manner of fantastic ideas and conceptions would be mixed into the soul-world, and a world might thus easily be constructed which had nothing to do with the real spiritual world. The student must continually practice self-control. The right thing to do is to strive for an ever clearer conception of the isolated real experiences, and to await the spontaneous arrival of new experiences which will connect themselves, as though of their own accord, with those already recorded. By virtue of the power of the spiritual world into which he has now found his way, and through continued application to his prescribed exercises, the student experiences an ever increasing extension and expansion of consciousness during sleep. The unconscious intervals during sleep-life grow ever smaller, while more and more experiences emerge from erstwhile unconsciousness. These experiences thus link themselves together increasingly of their own accord, without this true unity being disturbed by all manner of combinations and inferences, which in any case would only originate in an intellect accustomed to the physical world. Yet the less the habits of thought acquired in the physical world are allowed to play into these higher experiences, the better it is.

By thus conducting himself the student approaches ever nearer to the attainment

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of that condition, on his path to higher knowledge, in which the unconsciousness of sleep-life is transformed into complete consciousness. When his body rests, man lives in surroundings which are just as real as those of his waking daily life. It is needless to say that the reality during sleep is different from physical reality surrounding the physical body. The student learns—indeed he must learn if he is to retain a firm footing in the physical world and not become a visionary—to connect the higher experiences of sleep with his physical environment. At first, however, the world entered during sleep is a completely new revelation. This important stage of development, at which consciousness is retained in the life during sleep, is known in spiritual science as the continuity of consciousness. The condition here indicated is regarded, at a certain stage of development, as a kind of ideal, attainable at the end of a long path.

What the student first learns is the extension of consciousness into two soul-states, in the first of which only disordered dreams were previously possible, and in the second only unconscious dreamless sleep. Anyone having reached this stage of development does not cease experiencing and learning during those intervals when the physical body rests, and when the soul receives no impressions through the instrumentality of senses.

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VIII

THE SPLITTING OF THE HUMAN PERSONALITY

DURING SPIRITUAL TRAINING

DURING sleep no impressions are conveyed to the human soul through the instrumentality of the physical sense-organs. The impressions from the ordinary outer world do not find their way to the soul when in that condition. In certain respects the soul is actually outside the part of the human being—the so-called physical body—which in waking life is the medium for sense perceptions and thought. The soul is then only connected with the finer bodies (the etheric body and the astral body), which are beyond the scope of physical sense observation. But the activity of these finer bodies does not cease during sleep. Just as the physical body is connected and lives with the things and beings of the physical world, affecting them and being affected by them, so, too, does the soul live in a higher world; only, this life of the soul continues also during sleep. The soul is in full activity during sleep, but we can know nothing of this activity so long as we have no spiritual organs of perception through which to observe what is going on around us and see what we ourselves are doing during sleep, as we observe our daily physical environment with our ordinary senses. The preceding chapters have shown that esoteric training consists in the development of such spiritual sense organs. Now if, as a result of esoteric training, the student's life during sleep is transformed in the manner described in the foregoing chapter, he will, when in that condition, be able to follow consciously everything going on around him. He can at will find his way in his environment as he could, when awake, with his ordinary senses. It should here be noted that a higher degree of clairvoyance is required for the higher perception of ordinary physical environment. This was indicated in the last chapter. In the initial stages of his development the student perceives things pertaining to another world without being able to discern their connection with the objects of his daily physical environment.

These characteristics of life during sleep or in dreams illustrate what is continually taking place in the human being. The soul lives in uninterrupted activity in the higher worlds, even gathering from them the impulse to act upon the physical body. Ordinarily unconscious of his higher life, the esoteric student renders himself conscious of it, and thereby his whole life becomes transformed. As long as the soul remains unseeing in the higher sense it is guided by superior cosmic beings. And just as the life of a person born blind is changed, through a successful operation, from its previous dependence on a

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guide, so too is the life of a person changed through esoteric training. He outgrows the principle of being guided by a master and must henceforward undertake to be his own guide. The moment this occurs he is, of course, liable to commit errors totally unknown to ordinary consciousness. He acts now from a world from which, formerly, higher powers unknown to him influenced him. These higher powers are directed by the universal cosmic harmony. The student withdraws from this cosmic harmony, and must now himself accomplish things which were hitherto done for him without his co-operation.

It is for this reason that so much is found in books dealing with these matters concerning the dangers connected with the ascent into higher worlds. The descriptions sometimes given of these dangers may well make timid souls shudder at the prospect of this higher life. Yet the fact is that dangers only arise when the necessary precautions are neglected. If all the measures counseled by true esoteric science are adopted, the ascent will indeed ensue through experiences surpassing in power and magnitude everything the boldest flights of sense-bound fantasy can picture; and yet there can be no question of injury to health or life. The student meets with horrible powers threatening life at every turn and from every side. It will even be possible for him to make use of certain forces and beings existing beyond physical perception, and the temptation is great to control these forces for the furtherance of personal and forbidden interests, or to employ them wrongly out of a deficient knowledge of the higher worlds.

Some of these especially important experiences, for instance, the meeting with Guardian of the Threshold, will be described in the following chapters. Yet we must realize that the hostile powers are none the less present, even though we know nothing of them. It is true that in this case their relation to man is ordained by higher power, and that this relation alters when the human being consciously enters this world hitherto concealed from him. But at the same time his own existence is enhanced and the circle of his life enriched by a great and new field of experience. A real danger can only arise if the student, through impatience or arrogance, assumes too early a certain independence with regard to the experiences of the higher worlds; if he cannot wait to gain really sufficient insight into the supersensible laws. In these spheres, modesty and humility are far less empty words than in ordinary life. If the student possesses these qualities in the very best sense he may be certain that his ascent into the higher life will be achieved without danger to all that is commonly called health and life.

Above all things, no disharmony must ensue between the higher experiences and the events and demands of every-day life. Man's task must be entirely sought for on this earth, and anyone desiring to shirk his earthly task and to escape into another world may be certain he will never reach his goal. Yet what the senses perceive is only part of the world, and it is in the spirit world that the beings dwell who express themselves in the facts of the physical world. Man must become a partaker of the spirit in order to carry its revelations into the physical world. He transforms the earth by implanting in it what he has ascertained in the spiritual world. That is his task. It is only because the physical world is dependent upon the spiritual, and because man can work upon earth, in a true sense, only if he is a participator in those worlds in which the creative forces lie concealed—only for these reasons should he have the desire to ascend to the higher worlds.

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No one approaching esoteric training with these sentiments, and resolved not to deviate for a moment from these prescribed directions, need fear the slightest danger. No one should allow the prospect of these dangers to deter him from esoteric training; it should rather act as a strong challenge to one and all to acquire those faculties which every true esoteric student must possess.

After these preliminary observations that should dispel any element of terror, a description of some of the so-called dangers will be given. It is true that great changes take place in the student's finer bodies, as described above. These changes are connected with certain processes in the development of the three fundamental forces of the soul, with willing, feeling, and thinking. Before esoteric training, these forces are subject to a connection ordained by higher cosmic laws. Man's willing, feeling and thinking are not arbitrary. A particular idea arising in the mind is attended by a particular feeling, according to natural laws; or it is followed by a resolution of the will in equally natural sequence. We enter a room, find it stuffy, and open the window. We hear our name called and follow the call. We are questioned and we answer. We perceive an ill-smelling object and experience a feeling of disgust. These are simple connections between thinking, feeling, and willing. When we survey human life we find that everything is built up on such connections. Indeed, life is not termed normal unless such a connection, founded on the laws of human nature, is observed between thinking, feeling and willing. It would be found contrary to these laws if the sight of an ill-smelling object gave anyone pleasure, or if anyone, on being questioned, did not answer. The success anticipated from a right education or fitting instruction is based upon the presumption that a connection between thinking, feeling, and willing, corresponding to human nature, can be established in the pupil. Certain ideas are conveyed to him on the assumption that they will be associated, in regular fashion, with his feelings and volitions.

All this arises from the fact that in the finer soul-vehicles of man the central points of the three forces—thinking, feeling and willing—are connected with each other according to laws. This connection in the finer soul organism has its counterpart in the coarser physical body. In the latter, too, the organs of will are connected according to laws with those of thinking and feeling. A particular thought, therefore, inevitably evokes a feeling or an activity of will. In the course of higher development, the threads interconnecting the three fundamental forces are severed. At first this severance occurs only within the finer soul organism, but at a still higher stage the separation extends also to the physical body. It is a fact that in higher spiritual development the brain divides into three separate parts. This separation is not physically perceptible in the ordinary way, nor can it be demonstrated by the keenest instruments. Yet it occurs, and the clairvoyant has means of observing it. The brain of the higher clairvoyant divides into three independently active entities: The thought-brain, the feeling-brain, and the will-brain.

Thus the organs of thinking, feeling, and willing become individualized; their connection henceforth is not maintained by laws inherent in themselves, but must be managed by the awakened higher consciousness of the individual. This, then, is the change which the student observes coming over him: that no connection arises of itself between an idea and a feeling or a will-impulse, unless he himself provides one. No impulse urges

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him from thought to action unless he himself in freedom give rise to this impulse. He can henceforth confront, devoid of feeling, a fact which before his training would have filled him with glowing love or bitter hatred; and he can remain impassive at the thought which formerly would have spurred him on to action, as though of its own accord. He can perform actions through resolutions of the will for which there is not the slightest reason for anyone not having undergone esoteric training. The student's great achievement is the attainment of complete mastery over the combined activity of the three soul forces; but at the same time the responsibility for this activity is placed entirely in his own hands.

It is only through this transformation of his being that the student can enter consciously into relation with certain supersensible forces and beings, for his own soul forces are related to certain fundamental forces of the world. The force, for instance, inherent in the will can affect definite things and the beings of the higher worlds, and also perceive them; but it can only do so when liberated from its connection with thinking and feeling within the soul. The moment this connection is severed, the activity of the will can be exteriorized. The same applies to the forces of thinking and feeling. A feeling of hatred sent out by a person is visible to the clairvoyant as a fine luminous cloud of special coloring; and the clairvoyant can ward off this feeling of hatred, just as an ordinary person wards off a physical blow that is aimed at him. In the supersensible world, hatred becomes a visible phenomenon, but the clairvoyant can only perceive it in so far as he is able to project outwards the force lying in his feeling, just as the ordinary person directs outwards the receptive faculty of his eye. And what is said of hatred applies also to far more important phenomena of the physical world. The student can enter into conscious intercourse with them, thanks to the liberation of the fundamental forces of his soul.

Through the separation of the forces of thinking, feeling, and willing, the possibility of a three-fold aberration arises for anyone neglecting the injunctions given by esoteric science. Such an aberration can occur if the connecting threads are severed before the higher consciousness is sufficiently advanced to hold the reins and guide properly the separated forces into free and harmoniously combined activity. For as a rule, the three human soul-forces are not equally advanced in their development at any given period of life. In one person, thinking is ahead of feeling and willing; in a second, another soul-force has the upper hand over its companions. As long as the connection between the soul-forces is maintained as established by higher cosmic laws, no injurious irregularity, in a higher sense, can occur through the predominance of one force or another. Predominating will, for instance, is prevented by the leveling influence of thinking and feeling from lapsing into any particular excesses. When, however, a person of such predominating will undertakes esoteric training, feeling and thinking cease to exert their regular influence on the will when the latter constantly presses on to great exertions of power. If, then, such a person is not sufficiently advanced to control completely the higher consciousness and himself restore harmony, the will pursues its own unbridled way, continually overpowering its possessor. Feeling and thought lapse into complete impotence; the individual is scourged by his over-mastering will. A violent nature is the result, rushing from one unbridled action to another.

A second deviation occurs when feeling unduly shakes off its proper control. A

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person inclined to the revering of others may then diverge into unlimited dependence, to the extent of losing all personal will and thoughts. Instead of higher knowledge, the most pitiful vacuity and feebleness would become such a person's lot. Or, in the case of such inordinate predominance of the feeling life, a person with an inclination toward religious devotion can sink into the most degenerate welter.

The third evil is found when thought predominates, resulting in a contemplative nature, hostile to life and locked up within itself. The world, for such people, has no further importance save that it provides them with objects for satisfying their boundless thirst for wisdom. No thought ever moves them to an action or a feeling. They appear everywhere as cold and unfeeling creatures. They flee from every contact with the things of ordinary life as though from something exciting their aversion, or which, at any rate, had lost all meaning for them.

These are the three ways of error into which the student can stray: (1) exuberant violence of will, (2) sentimental emotionalism, and (3) cold, loveless striving for wisdom. For outward observation, and also from the ordinary (materialistic) medical standpoint, anyone thus gone astray is hardly distinguishable (especially in degree) from an insane or, at least, a highly neurasthenic person. Of course, the student must not resemble these. It is essential for him that the three fundamental soul-forces, thinking, feeling, and willing, should have undergone harmonious development before being released from their inherent connection and subordinated to the awakened higher consciousness. For once a mistake is made and one of the soul-forces falls a prey to unbridled excess, the higher soul comes into existence as a miscarriage. The unrestrained force pervades the individual's entire personality, and for a long time there can be no question of the balance being restored. What appears to be a harmless characteristic as long as its possessor is without esoteric training, namely, a predominance of thinking or feeling or willing, is so intensified in an esoteric student that the universally human element, indispensable for life, becomes obscured.

Yet a really serious danger cannot threaten the student until he has acquired the ability to include in his waking consciousness the experiences forthcoming during sleep. As long as there is only the question of illumination of the intervals of sleep, the life of the senses, regulated by universal cosmic laws, reacts during the waking hours on the disturbed equilibrium of the soul, tending to restore the balance. That is why it is so essential that the waking life of the student should be in every respect regular and healthy. The more capable he is of meeting the demands made by the outer world upon a healthy, sound constitution of body, soul, and spirit, the better it is for him.

On the other hand, it may be very bad for him if his ordinary waking life affects him in an exciting or irritating way, that is, if destructive or hampering influences of outer life affect him in addition to the great changes taking place in his inner self. He must seek to find everything corresponding to his powers and faculties which can lead him into undisturbed, harmonious communion with his surroundings, while avoiding everything detrimental to this harmony—everything that brings unrest and feverish haste into his life. And here it is not so much a question of casting off this unrest and haste in an external sense, but much more of taking care that thoughts, feelings, intentions, and bodily

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health are not thereby exposed to continual fluctuation. All this is not so easy for the student to accomplish as it was before esoteric training, for the higher experiences now playing into his life act upon his entire existence. Should anything within these higher experiences not be as it should, the irregularity continues lying in wait for him and may at every turn throw him off the right path.

For this reason the student should omit nothing which can secure for him unfailing mastery over his whole being. He should never be found wanting in presence of mind or in calm penetration of all situations of life. In the main, a genuine esoteric training gives rise of itself to all these qualities, and as it progresses the student only becomes acquainted with the dangers while simultaneously and at the right moment acquiring the full power to rout them from the field.

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IX

THE GUARDIAN OF THE THRESHOLD

THE important experiences marking the student's ascent into the higher worlds include his meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold. Strictly speaking, there are two Guardians: a lesser and a greater. The student meets the lesser Guardian when the threads connecting willing, feeling, and thinking within the finer astral and etheric bodies begin to loosen, in the way described in the foregoing chapter. The greater Guardian is encountered when this sundering of the connections extends to the physical parts of the body, that is, at first to the brain. The lesser Guardian is a sovereign being. He does not come into existence, as far as the student is concerned, until the latter has reached the requisite stage of development. Only some of his most important characteristics can here be indicated.

The attempt will now be made to describe in narrative form this meeting with the lesser Guardian of the Threshold, as a result of which the student learns that his thinking, feeling, and willing have become released within him from their inherent connection.

A truly terrible spectral being confronts him, and he will need all the presence of mind and faith in the security of his path which he has had ample opportunity to acquire in the course of his previous training.

The Guardian proclaims his signification somewhat in the following words: "Hitherto, powers invisible to thyself watched over thee. They saw to it that in the course of thy lives each of thy good deeds brought its reward, and each of thine evil deeds was attended by its evil results. Thanks to their influence thy character formed itself out of thy life-experiences and thy thoughts. They were the instruments of thy destiny. They ordained that measure of joy and pain allotted to thee in thine incarnations, according to thy conduct in lives gone by. They ruled over thee as the all-embracing law of karma. These powers will now partly release thee from their constraining influence; and henceforth must thou accomplish for thyself a part of the work which hitherto they performed for thee. Destiny struck thee many a hard blow in the past. Thou knewest not why. Each blow was the consequence of a harmful deed in a bygone life. Thou foundest joy and gladness, and thou didst take them as they came. They, too, were the fruits of former deeds. Thy character shows many a beautiful side, and many an ugly flaw. Thou hast thyself to thank for both, for they are the result of thy previous experiences and thoughts.

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These were till now unknown to thee; their effects alone were made manifest. The karmic powers, however, beheld all thy deeds in former lives, and all thy most secret thoughts and feelings, and determined accordingly thy present self and thy present mode of life. But now all the good and evil sides of thy bygone lives shall be revealed to thee. Hitherto they were interwoven with thine own being; they were in thee and thou couldst not see them, even as thou canst not behold thine own brain with physical eyes. But now they become released from thee; they detach themselves from thy personality.

They assume an independent form which thou canst see even as thou beholdest the stones and plants of the outer world. And . . . I am that very being who shaped my body out of thy good and evil achievements. My spectral form is woven out of thine own life's record. Till now thou hast borne me invisibly within thee, and it was well that this was so; for the wisdom of thy destiny, though concealed from thee, could thus work within thee, so that the hideous stains on my form should be blotted out. Now that I have come forth from within thee, that concealed wisdom, too, has departed from thee. It will pay no further heed to thee; it will leave the work in thy hands alone. I must become a perfect and glorious being, or fall a prey to corruption; and should this occur, I would drag thee also down with me into a dark and corrupt world. If thou wouldst avoid this, then thine own wisdom must become great enough to undertake the task of that other, concealed wisdom, which has departed from thee. As a form visible to thyself I will never for an instant leave thy side, once thou hast crossed my Threshold. And in future, whenever thou dost act or think wrongly thou wilt straightway perceive thy guilt as a hideous, demoniacal distortion of my form. Only when thou hast made good all thy bygone wrongs and hast so purified thyself that all further evil is, for thee, a thing impossible, only then will my being have become transformed into radiant beauty. Then, too, shall I again become united with thee for the welfare of thy future activity.

"Yet my Threshold is fashioned out of all the timidity that remains in thee, out of all the dread of the strength needed to take full responsibility for all thy thoughts and actions. As long as there remains in thee a trace of fear of becoming thyself the guide of thine own destiny, just so long will this Threshold lack what still remains to be built into it. And as long as a single stone is found missing, just so long must thou remain standing as though transfixed; or else stumble. Seek not, then, to cross this Threshold until thou dost feel thyself entirely free from fear and ready for the highest responsibility. Hitherto I only emerged from thy personality when death recalled thee from an earthly life; but even then my form was veiled from thee. Only the powers of destiny who watched over thee beheld me and could thus, in the intervals between death and a new birth, build in thee, in accordance with my appearance, that power and capacity thanks to which thou couldst labor in a new earth life at the beautifying of my form, for thy welfare and progress. It was I, too, whose imperfection ever and again constrained the powers of destiny to lead thee back to a new incarnation upon earth. I was present at the hour of thy death, and it was on my account that the Lords of Karma ordained thy reincarnation. And it is only by thus unconsciously transforming me to complete perfection in ever recurring earthly lives that thou couldst have escaped the powers of death and passed over into immortality united with me.

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“Visible do I thus stand before thee today, just as I have ever stood invisible beside thee in the hour of death. When thou shalt have crossed my Threshold, thou wilt enter those realms to which thou hast hitherto only had access after physical death. Thou dost now enter them with full knowledge, and henceforth as thou wanderest outwardly visible upon the earth thou wilt at the same time wander in the kingdom of death, that is, in the kingdom of life eternal. I am indeed the Angel of Death; but I am at the same time the bearer of a higher life without end. Through me thou wilt die with thy body still living, to be reborn into an imperishable existence.

“Into this kingdom thou art now entering; thou wilt meet beings that are supersensible, and happiness will be thy lot. But I myself must provide thy first acquaintance with that world, and I am thine own creation. Formerly I drew my life from thine; but now thou hast awakened me to a separate existence so that I stand before thee as the visible gauge of thy future deeds—perhaps, too, as thy constant reproach. Thou hast formed me, but by so doing thou hast undertaken, as thy duty, to transform me.”

(It will be gathered from the above that the Guardian of the Threshold is an (astral) figure, revealing itself to the student's awakened higher sight; and it is to this supersensible encounter that spiritual science conducts him. It is a lower magical process to make the Guardian of the Threshold physically visible also. That was attained by producing a cloud of fine substance, a kind of frankincense resulting from a particular mixture of a number of substances. The developed power of the magician is then able to mould the frankincense into shape, animating it with the still unredeemed karma of the individual. Such physical phenomena are no longer necessary for those sufficiently prepared for the higher sight; and besides this, anyone who sees, without adequate preparation, his unredeemed karma appear before his eyes as a living creature would run the risk of straying into evil byways. Bulwer Lytton's Zanon contains in novel form a description of the Guardian of the Threshold.)

What is here indicated in narrative form must not be understood in the sense of an allegory, but as an experience of the highest possible reality befalling the esoteric student.

The Guardian must warn him not to go a step further unless he feels in himself the strength to fulfill the demands made in the above speech. However horrible the form assumed by the Guardian, it is only the effect of the student's own past life, his own character risen out of him into independent existence. This awakening is brought about by the separation of will, thought, and feeling. To feel for the first time that one has oneself called a spiritual being into existence is in itself an experience of deepest significance. The student's preparation must aim at enabling him to endure the terrible sight without a trace of timidity and, at the moment of the meeting, to feel his strength so increased that he can undertake fully conscious the responsibility for transforming and beautifying the Guardian.

If successful, this meeting with the Guardian results in the student's next physical death being an entirely different event from the death as he knew it formerly. He experiences death consciously by laying aside the physical body as one discards a garment

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that is worn out or perhaps rendered useless through a sudden rent. Thus his physical death is of special importance only for those living with him, whose perception is still restricted to the world of the senses. For them the student dies; but for himself nothing of importance is changed in his whole environment. The entire supersensible world stood open to him before his death, and it is this same world that now confronts him after death.

The Guardian of the Threshold is also connected with other matters. The person belongs to a family, a nation, a race; his activity in this world depends upon his belonging to some such community. His individual character is also connected with it. The conscious activity of individual persons by no means exhausts everything to be reckoned with in a family, a nation, or a race. Besides their character, families, nations, and races have also their destiny. For persons restricted to their senses these things remain mere general ideas; and the materialistic thinker, in his prejudice, will look down with contempt on the spiritual scientist when he hears that for him, family and national character, lineal or racial destiny, are vested in beings just as real as the personality in which the character and destiny of the individual man are vested. The spiritual scientist becomes acquainted with higher worlds of which the separate personalities are members, just as arms and legs are members of the human being.

Besides the separate individuals, a very real family and national group soul and racial spirit is at work in the life of a family, a people, or a race. Indeed, in a certain sense the separate individuals are merely the executive organs of these family group souls, racial spirits, and so on. It is nothing but the truth to say, for instance, that a national group soul makes use of each individual man belonging to that nation for the execution of some work. The group soul of a people does not descend into physical reality but dwells in the higher worlds and, in order to work in the physical world, makes use of the physical organs of each individual human being. In a higher sense, it is like an architect making use of workmen for executing the details of a building. In the truest sense, everyone receives his allotted task from his family, national, or racial group soul. Now, the ordinary person is by no means initiated into the higher design of his work. He joins unconsciously in the tasks of his people and of his race.

From the moment the student meets the Guardian, he must not only know his own tasks, but must knowingly collaborate in those of his folk, his race. Every extension of his horizon necessarily enlarges the scope of his duties. What actually happens is that the student adds a new body to his finer soul-body. He puts on a second garment. Hitherto he found his way through the world with the coverings enveloping his personality; and what he had to accomplish for his community, his nation, his race, was directed by higher spirits who made use of his personality.

And now, a further revelation made to him by the Guardian of the Threshold is that henceforth these spirits will withdraw their guiding hand from him. He must step out of the circle of his community. Yet as an isolated personality he would become hardened in himself and decline into ruin, did he not, himself, acquire those powers which are vested in the national and racial spirits. Many, no doubt, will say: "Oh, I have entirely freed myself from all lineal and racial connections; I only want to be a human being and nothing but a human being." To these one must reply: "Who, then, brought you to this free-

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dom? Was it not your family who placed you in the world where you now stand? Have you not your lineage, your nation, your race to thank for being what you are? They have brought you up. And if now, exalted above all prejudices, you are one of the light-bringers and benefactors of your stock and even of your race, it is to their up-bringing that you owe it. Yes, even when you say you are 'nothing but a human being,' even the fact that you have become such a personality you owe to the spirits of your communities."

Only the esoteric student learns what it means to be entirely cut off from his family, national, or racial spirit. He alone realizes, through personal experience, the insignificance of all such education in respect of the life now confronting him. For everything inculcated by education completely melts away when the threads binding will, thought, and feeling are severed. He looks back on the result of all his previous education as he might on a house crumbling away brick by brick, which he must now rebuild in a new form. And again, it is more than a mere symbolical expression to say that when the Guardian has enunciated his first statement, there arises from the spot where he stands a whirlwind which extinguishes all those spiritual lights that have hitherto illumined the pathway of his life. Utter darkness, relieved only by the rays issuing from the Guardian himself, unfolds before the student. And out of this darkness resounds the Guardian's further admonition: "Step not across my Threshold until thou dost clearly realize that thou wilt thyself illumine the darkness ahead of thee; take not a single step forward until thou art positive that thou hast sufficient oil in thine own lamp. The lamps of the guides whom thou hast hitherto followed will now no longer be available to thee."

At these words, the student must turn and glance backward. The Guardian of the Threshold now draws aside a veil which till now had concealed deep life-mysteries. The family, national, and racial spirits are revealed to the student in their full activity, so that he perceives clearly on the one hand, how he has hitherto been led, and no less clearly on the other hand, that he will henceforward no longer enjoy this guidance. That is the second warning received at the Threshold from its Guardian.

Without preparation, no one could endure the sight of what has here been indicated. But the higher training which makes it possible at all for the student to advance up to the Threshold simultaneously puts him in a position to find the necessary strength at the right moment. Indeed, the training can be so harmonious in its nature that the entry into the higher life is relieved of everything of an agitating or tumultuous character. His experience at the Threshold will then be attended by a premonition of that felicity which is to provide the keynote of his newly awakened life. The feeling of a new freedom will outweigh all other feelings; and attended by this feeling, his new duties and responsibilities will appear as something which man, at a particular stage of life, must needs take upon himself.

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X

LIFE AND DEATH: THE GREATER GUARDIAN OF THE THRESHOLD

IT HAS been described in the foregoing chapter how significant for the human being is his meeting with the so-called lesser Guardian of the Threshold by virtue of the fact that he becomes aware of confronting a supersensible being whom he has himself brought into existence, and whose body consists of the hitherto invisible results of the student's own actions, feelings, and thoughts. These unseen forces have become the cause of his destiny and his character, and he realizes how he himself founded the present in the past. He can understand why his inner self, now standing to a certain extent revealed before him, includes particular inclinations and habits, and he can also recognize the origin of certain blows of fate that have befallen him. He perceives why he loves one thing and hates another; why one thing makes him happy and another unhappy.

Visible life is explained by the invisible causes. The essential facts of life, too—health and illness, birth and death—unveil themselves before his gaze. He observes how before his birth he wove the causes which necessarily led to his return into life. Henceforth he knows that being within himself which is fashioned with all its imperfections in the visible world, and which can only be brought to its final perfection in this same visible world. For in no other world is an opportunity given to build up and complete this being.

Moreover, he recognizes that death cannot sever him forever from this world; for he says to himself: "Once I came into this world because, being what I was, I needed the life it provided to acquire qualities unattainable in any other world. And I must remain bound to this world until I have developed within myself everything that can here be gained. I shall some day become a useful collaborator in another world only by acquiring all the requisite faculties in this physical world."

Thanks to his insight into the supersensible world, the initiate gains a better knowledge and appreciation of the true value of visible nature than was possible before his higher training; and this may be counted among his most important experiences. Anyone not possessing this insight and perhaps therefore imagining the supersensible regions to be infinitely more valuable, is likely to underestimate the physical world. Yet the possessor of this insight knows that without experience in visible reality he would be totally powerless in that other invisible reality. Before he can live in the latter he must have the requisite faculties and instruments which can only be acquired in the visible world. Consciousness in the invisible world is not possible without spiritual sight, but this power of vision in the higher world is gradually developed through experience in

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the lower. No one can be born in the spiritual world with spiritual eyes without having first developed them in the physical world, any more than a child could be born with physical eyes, had they not already been formed within the mother's womb.

From this standpoint it will also be readily understood why the Threshold to the supersensible world is watched over by a Guardian. In no case may real insight into those regions be permitted to anyone lacking the requisite faculties; therefore, when at the hour of death anyone enters the other world while still incompetent to work in it, the higher experiences are shrouded from him until he is fit to behold them.

When the student enters the supersensible world, life acquires quite a new meaning for him; he discerns in the physical world the seed-ground of a higher world, so that in a certain sense the higher will appear defective without the lower. Two outlooks are opened before him; the first into the past and the second into the future. His vision extends to a past in which this physical world was not yet existent; for he has long since discarded the prejudice that the supersensible world was developed out of the sense-world. He knows that the former existed first, and that out of it everything physical was evolved. He sees that he himself belonged to a supersensible world before coming for the first time into this sense-world. But this pristine supersensible world needed to pass through the sense-world, for without this passage its further evolution would not have been possible.

It can only pursue its course when certain things will have developed requisite faculties within the realm of the senses. These beings are none other than human beings. They owe their present life to an imperfect stage of spiritual existence and are being led, even within this stage, to that perfection which will make them fit for further work in the higher world. At this point the outlook is directed into the future. A higher stage of the supersensible world is discerned which will contain the fruits matured in the sense-world. The sense-world as such will be overcome, but its results will be embodied in a higher world.

The existence of disease and death in the sense-world is thus explained. Death merely expresses the fact that the original supersensible world reached a point beyond which it could not progress by itself. Universal death must needs have overtaken it, had it not received a fresh life-impulse. Thus this new life has evolved into a battle with universal death. From the remnants of a dying, rigid world there sprouted the seeds of a new one. That is why we have death and life in the world. The decaying portion of the old world adheres to the new life blossoming from it, and the process of evolution moves slowly. This comes to expression most clearly in man himself. The sheath he bears is gathered from the preserved remnants of the old world, and within this sheath the germ of that being is matured which will live in the future.

Thus man is twofold: mortal and immortal. The mortal is in its last, the immortal in its first stage. But it is only within this twofold world, which finds its expression in the sense-world, that he can acquire the requisite faculties to lead the world to immortality. Indeed, this task is precisely to gather the fruits of the mortal for the immortal. And as he glances at himself as the result of his own work in the past he cannot but say: "I have in

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me the elements of a decaying world. They are at work in me, and I can only break their power little by little, thanks to the new immortal elements coming to life within me." This is the path leading man from death to life. Could he but speak to himself with full consciousness at the hour of his death, he would say: "The perishing world was my task-master. I am now dying as the result of the entire past in which I am enmeshed. Yet the soil of mortal life has matured the seeds of immortal life. I carry them with me into another world.

"If it had merely depended on the past, I could never have been born. The life of the past came to an end with birth. Life in the sense-world is wrested from universal death by the newly formed life-germ. The time between birth and death is merely an expression for the sum of values wrested from the dying past by the new life; and illness is nothing but the continued effect of the dying portions of the past."

In the above the answer will be found to the question why man works his way only gradually through error and imperfection to the good and true. His actions, feelings, and thoughts are at first dominated by the perishing and the mortal. The latter gave rise to his sense-organs. For this reason, these organs and all things activating them are doomed to perish. The imperishable will not be found in the instincts, impulses, and passions, or in the organs belonging to them, but only in the work produced by these organs. Man must extract from the perishable everything that can be extracted, and this work alone will enable him to discard the background out of which he has grown, and which finds its expression in the physical sense-world.

Thus the first Guardian confronts man as the counterpart of his two-fold nature in which perishable and imperishable are blended; and it stands clearly proved how far removed he still is from attaining that sublime luminous figure which may again dwell in the pure, spiritual world. The extent to which he is entangled in the physical sense-world is exposed to the student's view. The presence of instincts, impulses, desires, egotistical wishes and all forms of selfishness, and so forth, expresses itself in this entanglement, as it does further in his membership in a race, a nation, and so forth; for peoples and races are but steps leading to pure humanity. A race or a nation stands so much the higher, the more perfectly its members express the pure, ideal human type, the further they have worked their way from the physical and perishable to the supersensible and imperishable. The evolution of man through the incarnations in ever higher national and racial forms is thus a process of liberation. Man must finally appear in harmonious perfection. In a similar way, the pilgrimage through ever purer forms of morality and religion is a perfecting process; for every moral stage retains the passion for the perishable beside the seeds of an ideal future.

Now in the Guardian of the Threshold as described above, the product of the past is manifest, containing only so many seeds of the future as could be planted in the course of time. Yet everything that can be extracted from the sense-world must be carried into the supersensible world. Were man to bring with him only what had been woven into his counterpart out of the past, his earthly task would remain but partially accomplished. For this reason the lesser Guardian of the Threshold is joined, after a time, by the greater Guardian. The meeting with the second Guardian will again be described in narrative

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form.

When the student has recognized all the elements from which he must liberate himself, his way is barred by a sublime luminous being whose beauty is difficult to describe in the words of human language. This encounter takes place when the sundering of the organs of thinking, feeling, and willing extends to the physical body, so that their reciprocal connection is no longer regulated by themselves but by the higher consciousness, which has now entirely liberated itself from physical conditions. The organs of thinking, feeling and willing will then be controlled from supersensible regions as instruments in the power of the human soul. The latter, thus liberated from all physical bonds, is now confronted by the second Guardian of the Threshold who speaks as follows:

“Thou hast released thyself from the world of the senses. Thou hast won the right to become a citizen of the supersensible world, whence thine activity can now be directed. For thine own sake, thou dost no longer require thy physical body in its present form. If thine intention were merely to acquire the faculties necessary for life in the supersensible world, thou needest no longer return to the sense-world. But now behold me. See how sublimely I tower above all that thou hast made of thyself thus far. Thou hast attained thy present degree of perfection thanks to the faculties thou wert able to develop in the sense-world as long as thou wert still confined to it. But now a new era is to begin, in which thy liberated powers must be applied to further work in the world of the senses. Hitherto thou hast sought only thine own release, but now, having thyself become free, thou canst go forth as a liberator of thy fellows. Until today thou hast striven as an individual, but now seek to coordinate thyself with the whole, so that thou mayst bring into the supersensible world not thyself alone, but all things else existing in the world of the senses. Thou wilt some day be able to unite with me, but I cannot be blessed so long as others remain unredeemed. As a separate freed being, thou wouldst fain enter at once the kingdom of the supersensible; yet thou wouldst be forced to look down on the still unredeemed beings in the physical world, having sundered thy destiny from theirs, although thou and they are inseparably united. Ye all did perforce descend into the sense-world to gather powers needed for a higher world. To separate thyself from thy fellows would mean to abuse those very powers which thou couldst not have developed save in their company. Thou couldst not have descended had they not done so; and without them the powers needed for supersensible existence would fail thee. Thou must now share with thy fellows the powers which, together with them, thou didst acquire. I shall therefore bar thine entry into the higher regions of the supersensible world so long as thou hast not applied all the powers thou hast acquired to the liberation of thy companions. With the powers already at thy disposal thou mayst sojourn in the lower regions of the supersensible world; but I stand before the portal of the higher regions as the Cherub with the fiery sword before Paradise, and I bar thine entrance as long as powers unused in the sense-world still remain in thee. And if thou dost refuse to apply thy powers in this world, others will come who will not refuse; and a higher supersensible world will receive all the fruits of the sense-world, while thou wilt lose from under thy feet the very ground in which thou wert rooted. The purified world will develop above and beyond thee, and thou shalt be excluded from it. Thus thou wouldst tread the black path, while the others from whom thou didst sever thyself tread the white path.”

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With these words the greater Guardian makes his presence known soon after the meeting with the first Guardian has taken place. The initiate knows full well what is in store for him if he yields to the temptation of a premature abode in the supersensible world. An indescribable splendor shines forth from the second Guardian of the Threshold; union with him looms as a far distant ideal before the soul's vision. Yet there is also the certitude that this union will not be possible until all the powers afforded by this world are applied to the task of its liberation and redemption. By fulfilling the demands of the higher light-being the initiate will contribute to the liberation of the human race. He lays his gifts on the sacrificial altar of humanity. Should he prefer his own premature elevation into the supersensible world, the stream of human evolution will flow over and past him. After his liberation he can gain no new powers from the world of the senses; and if he places his work at the world's disposal it will entail his renouncement of any further benefit for himself.

It does not follow that, when called upon to decide, anyone will naturally follow the white path. That depends entirely upon whether he is so far purified at the time of his decision that no trace of self-seeking makes this prospect of felicity appear desirable. For the allurements here are the strongest possible; whereas on the other side no special allurements are evident. Here nothing appeals to his egotism. The gift he receives in the higher regions of the supersensible world is nothing that comes to him, but only something that flows from him, that is, love for the world and for his fellows.

Nothing that egotism desires is denied upon the black path, for the latter provides, on the contrary, for the complete gratification of egotism, and will not fail to attract those desiring merely their own felicity, for it is indeed the appropriate path for them. No one therefore should expect the occultists of the white path to give him instruction for the development of his own egotistical self. They do not take the slightest interest in the felicity of the individual man. Each can attain that for himself, and it is not the task of the white occultists to shorten the way; for they are only concerned with the development and liberation of all human beings and all creatures.

Their instructions therefore deal only with the development of powers for collaboration in this work. Thus they place selfless devotion and self-sacrifice before all other qualities. They never actually refuse anyone, for even the greatest egotist can purify himself; but no one merely seeking an advantage for himself will ever obtain assistance from the white occultists. Even when they do not refuse their help, he, the seeker, deprives himself of the advantage resulting from their assistance.

Anyone, therefore, really following the instructions of the good occultists will, upon crossing the Threshold, understand the demands of the greater Guardian; anyone, however, not following their instructions can never hope to reach the Threshold. Their instructions, if followed, produce good results or no results; for it is no part of their task to lead to egotistical felicity and a mere existence in the supersensible worlds. In fact, it becomes their duty to keep the student away from the supersensible world until he can enter it with the will for selfless collaboration.

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APPENDIX

THE path to supersensible knowledge, as described in this book, leads the soul through experiences concerning the nature of which it is especially important to avoid all illusions and misconceptions. Yet it is but natural that the latter should arise in such questions as are here considered. In this connection one of the most serious mistakes occurs when the whole range of inner experience dealt with in true spiritual science is distorted into appearing in the same category as superstition, visionary dreaming, mediumship (spiritism), and other degenerate practices. This distortion is often due to the fact that persons desirous of following the path described in this book are confused with others who in their search for supersensible reality, and as a result of methods foreign to genuine striving for knowledge, wander into undesirable paths. The experiences through which the human soul lives on the path here described are wholly confined to the realm of psycho-spiritual experience.

They are only possible if equal freedom and independence from the bodily life are attained for certain other inner experiences, as is the case during ordinary consciousness, when thoughts are made concerning things outwardly perceived or inwardly felt and willed, thoughts which do not themselves originate in what is perceived, felt, and willed. There are people who deny the existence of such thoughts. They believe that no thought is possible that is not extracted from perceptions or from the inner life dependent on the body. For them, all thoughts are to a certain extent mere reflections of perceptions and of inner experiences. This view, however, can be expressed only by those who have never raised themselves to the faculty of experiencing with their souls a self-sustaining life in pure thought.

For others, who have lived through this experience, it is a matter of knowledge that wherever thought dominates the life of the soul to the degree that this thought permeates other soul functions, the human being is involved in an activity in whose origin his body has no share. In the ordinary life of the soul, thought is almost always mixed with other functions: perception, feeling, willing and so forth. These other functions are effectuated by the body; yet thought plays into them, and to the degree that it does this a process takes place, in and through the human being, in which his body has no share. This can only be denied so long as the illusion is not discarded which arises from observing thought only when the latter is united with other functions. Yet an inner exertion is possible which will enable the thinking part of inner life to be experienced as distinct

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from everything else. Something consisting in pure thought alone can be detached from the encompassing soul-life, that is, thoughts that are self-sustaining and from which everything provided by perception or bodily conditioned inner life is excluded. Such thoughts reveal themselves through themselves, through what they are, as spiritual supersensible substance.

Anyone uniting himself with them, while excluding all perception, all memory, and every other token of inner life, knows himself to be in a supersensible region and experiences himself outside the physical body. For anyone familiar with this whole process, the question can no longer arise: Can the soul live through experiences outside the body in a supersensible world? For it would mean denying what he knows from experience. The only question for him is: What prevents such a positive fact from being recognized? And the answer he finds to this question is that the fact does not reveal itself unless the student first cultivates a condition of soul which allows him to become the recipient of this revelation.

Now, people become at once suspicious when an activity confined entirely to the soul is expected of them, in order that something independent of themselves should reveal itself. They believe that they themselves give the revelation its content because they prepare themselves to receive it. They expect experiences to which they contribute nothing and which allow them to remain quite passive. Should such people, in addition, be ignorant of the simplest scientific requirements for the comprehension of a given fact, they will take for an objective revelation of non-sensible substances contents and productions of the soul in which the soul's conscious participation is reduced below the level maintained in sense-perception and will-impelled action. Such are the soul-contents provided by the experiences and revelations of the visionary and the medium. But what comes to the fore through such revelations is not a supersensible but a sub-sensible world.

Human waking life does not run its course completely within the body; the most conscious part of it runs its course on the boundary between the body and the physical outer world; thus the process of perception with the organs of sense is as much an extra-physical process penetrating into the body as a permeation of this process from out the body; so too, is the life of will, which rests upon the insertion of the human being into the cosmic being, so that what occurs in the human being through his will is simultaneously a link in the chain of cosmic occurrence. In this life of the soul running on the boundary of the physical body, the human being is to a high degree dependent on his physical organization; but the function of thought plays into this activity, and in as much as this is the case, the human being makes himself independent of his bodily organization in the functions of sense perception and willing.

In the experiences of the visionary and in mediumistic phenomena the human being becomes completely dependent on his body. He excludes from the life of his soul that function which, in perception and willing, makes him independent of his body. Thus the content and productions of his soul are merely revelations of his bodily life. The experiences of the visionary and the phenomena produced by the medium owe their existence to the fact that a person while thus experiencing and producing is, with his

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soul, less independent of his body than in ordinary perception and willing. In the experience of the supersensible as indicated in this book, the development of soul-life proceeds in just the opposite direction from that taken by the visionary and the medium.

The soul acquires a progressively greater independence of the body than is the case in perceiving and willing. The same independence realized in the experience of pure thought is attained by the soul for a far wider range of activity.

For the supersensible activity of the soul here meant, it is especially important to grasp and realize in the clearest possible way this experience of life in pure thought. For in the main, this experience is already a supersensible activity of the soul, but one in which nothing supersensible is as yet perceived. With pure thought we live in the supersensible; but we experience only this in supersensible fashion; we do not yet experience anything else supersensibly. And supersensible experience must be a continuation of that life already attained by the soul when united with pure thought. For this reason it is so important to gain knowledge of this union in the right way, for it is from its comprehension that light shines forth to bring correct insight into the nature of supersensible knowledge. The moment the life of the soul links below the level of clear consciousness existing in thought, the soul is on the wrong path as far as true knowledge of the supersensible world is concerned: for the soul is seized by the bodily functions, and what is then experienced is not the revelation of a supersensible world, but bodily revelations confined to the supersensible world.

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(2) Having penetrated to the sphere of the supersensible, the soul's experiences are of such a nature that descriptive expressions cannot so easily be found for them as for experiences confined to the world of the senses. Care must often be taken not to overlook the fact that to a certain extent, in descriptions of supersensible experience, the distance separating the actual fact from the language used to describe it is greater than in descriptions of physical experience. The reader must be at pains to realize that many an expression is intended as an illustration, merely indicating in a delicate way the reality to which it refers.

Thus it is said earlier in this book: "Originally all rules and teachings of spiritual science were expressed in a symbolical sign-language." And also, a "certain writing system" was mentioned. Now, anyone may easily be led to suppose that such a writing system can be learned in the same way we learn the letters of an ordinary physical language, and their combinations. In this connection it must be pointed out that there have been and there still are spiritual scientific signs by means of which supersensible facts are expressed. And anyone initiated into the meaning of these symbols attains thereby the means of directing his inner life toward the supersensible realities in question.

But what is of far greater importance for supersensible experiences is that, in the course of that supersensible experience to which the realization of the contents of this book leads, the soul should, in the contemplation of the supersensible, gain the revelation of such a writing through personal experience. The supersensible says something to the soul which the soul must translate into these illustrative signs, so that it can be

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surveyed with full consciousness. The statement can be made that what is imparted in this book can be realized by every soul. And in the course of this realization, which the soul can personally determine according to the indications given, the resulting events occur as described.

Let the reader take this book as a conversation between the author and himself. The statement that the student needs personal instruction should be understood in the sense that this book itself is personal instruction. In earlier times there were reasons for reserving such personal instruction for oral teaching; today we have reached a stage in the evolution of humanity in which spiritual scientific knowledge must become far more widely disseminated than formerly. It must be placed within the reach of everyone to a quite different extent from what was the case in older times. Hence the book replaces the former oral instruction. It is only to a limited extent correct to say that further personal instruction is necessary beyond that contained in this book. No doubt someone may need assistance, and it may be of importance for him or her; but it would be false to believe that there are any cardinal points not mentioned in this book. These can be found by anyone who reads correctly, and, above all, completely.

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(3) The descriptive instructions given in this book appear at first sight to require the complete alteration of the whole human being. Yet when correctly read it will be found that nothing more is intended than a description of the inner soul state required of anyone in those moments of life at which he confronts the supersensible world. He develops this state of soul as a second being within himself; and the healthy other being pursues its course in the old way. The unfolding trainee knows how to hold the two beings apart in full consciousness and how to make them act and react on each other in the right way. This does not make him useless and incompetent for life, nor does he lose his interest and skill in it and become a spiritual researcher the whole day long.

It is of course true that the student's manner of experience in the supersensible world will shed its light over his whole being; but far from distracting him from life, it makes him more capable and his life more productive. The necessity of adopting the existing method of description is due to the fact that every cognitive process directed toward the supersensible calls the whole human being into action; so that in the moment of such cognition the whole human being is engaged, while the supersensible cognitive process engages the whole human being. The whole human being becomes an eye or an ear.

For this reason, when information is given concerning the construction of supersensible cognitive processes, it appears as though a transformation of the human being were meant, as if nothing were right in the ordinary human being, and he should become quite different.

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(4) I should like to add to what was said earlier concerning "some results of initiation," something which, with a slight alteration, can apply to other parts of the book. It

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may occur to someone to ask whether such figurative descriptions are necessary, and whether it would not be possible to describe these supersensible experiences in ideas, without such illustrations. In reply it must be pointed out that for the experience of supersensible reality it is essential that the human being knew himself as a supersensible being in a supersensible world. Without this vision of his own supersensible nature, whose reality is fully manifest in the descriptions here given of the lotus flowers and the etheric body, the human being's experience of himself in the supersensible world would be like placing him in the sensible world in such a way that the things and processes around him manifested themselves, while he himself had no knowledge of his own body. His perception of his own supersensible form in soul-body and etheric body enables him to stand, conscious of himself, in the supersensible world, just as he is conscious of himself in the physical world through the perception of his physical body.

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A ROAD TO SELF-KNOWLEDGE

AND

THE THRESHOLD OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

A ROAD TO SELF-KNOWLEDGE IN EIGHT MEDITATIONS

This book is an “amplification” of the book entitled Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment. It consists of eight “meditations.” The eight topics treated are: The Physical Body, The Etheric Body, Clairvoyant Cognition of the Elemental World, The Guardian of the Threshold, The Astral Body, The Ego Body or Thought Body, The Character of Experience in the Supersensible Worlds, and The Way in Which Man Beholds His Repeated Earth Lives.

Introductory Remarks

IT is the endeavour of this treatise to convey spiritual-scientific knowledge concerning the being of man. The method of representation is arranged in such a way that the reader may grow into what is depicted, so that, in the course of reading, it becomes for him a kind of self-conference. If this soliloquy takes on such a form that thereby hitherto concealed forces, which can be awakened in every soul, reveal themselves, then the reading leads to a real inner work of the soul; and the latter can see itself gradually urged on to that soul-journeying, which truly advances towards the beholding of the spiritual world. What has to be imparted, therefore, has been given in the form of eight Meditations, which can be actually practised. If this is done, they can be adapted for imparting to the soul, through its own inner deepening, that about which they speak.

It has been my aim on the one hand, to give something to those readers who have already made themselves conversant with the literature dealing with the domain of the supersensible, as it is here understood. Thus through the style of the description, through the communication directly connecting with the soul's experience, perhaps those who have knowledge of supersensible life will here find something that may appear of importance to them. On the other hand, many a one can find that just through this method of representation profit may be gained by those who yet stand far distant from the achievements of Spiritual Science.

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Although this work is intended as an amplification of my other writings in the domain of Spiritual Science, it should nevertheless be possible to read it independently.

It has been my endeavour in my books, Theosophy and Occult Science, to represent the things as they show themselves to observation, when it ascends to the Spiritual. In these works the method of representation is descriptive and its direction prescribed by conformity to the law manifesting out of the things themselves. In this, A Road to Self-Knowledge, the method of representation is different. Herein is stated that which can be experienced by a soul which sets out on the path to the Spirit in a certain manner. The treatise may therefore be regarded as an account of experiences of the soul; only it must be taken into consideration that the experiences which can be gained in such a way as is here described, must assume an individual form in each soul according to its own peculiarity. It has been my endeavour to do justice to this fact, so that one can also imagine that what is depicted here has been actually lived through by an individual soul, exactly as represented. The title of this treatise is, therefore, A Road to Self-knowledge. On that account it may serve the purpose of assisting other souls to live into this portrayal and attain to corresponding goals, and is an amplification of my book, Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment.

Only isolated fundamental experiences of a spiritual scientific nature are represented. The giving of information in this manner of the further spheres of "Spiritual Science" is suspended for the present.

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First Meditation

In which the Attempt is made to obtain a True Idea of the Physical Body

WHEN the soul is surrendered to the phenomena of the outer world by means of physical perception, it cannot be said—after true self-analysis—that the soul perceives these phenomena, or that it actually experiences the things of the outer world. For, during the time of surrender, in its devotion to the outer world, the soul knows in truth nothing of itself. The fact is rather that the sunlight itself, radiating from things through space in various colours, lives or experiences itself within the soul. When the soul enjoys any event, at the moment of enjoyment it actually is joy in so far as it is conscious of being anything. Joy experiences itself in the soul. The soul is one with its experience of the world. It does not experience itself as something separate which feels joy, admiration, delight, satisfaction, or fear. It actually is joy, admiration, delight, satisfaction, and fear. If the soul would always admit this fact, then and only then would the occasions when it retires from the experience of the outer world and contemplates itself by itself appear in the right light. These moments would then appear as forming a life of quite a special character, which at once shows itself to be entirely different from the ordinary life of the soul. It is with this special kind of life that the riddles of the soul's existence begin to dawn upon our consciousness. And these riddles are, in fact, the source of all other riddles of the world. For two worlds—an outer and an inner—present themselves to the spirit of man, directly the soul for a longer or shorter time ceases to be one with the outer world and withdraws into the loneliness of its own existence.

Now this withdrawal is no simple process, which, having been once accomplished, may be repeated again in much the same way. It is much more like the beginning of a pilgrimage into worlds previously unknown. When once this pilgrimage has been begun, every step made will call forth others, and will also be the preparation for these others. It is the first step which makes the soul capable of taking the next one. And each step brings fuller knowledge of the answer to the question: "What is Man in the true sense of the word?" Worlds open up which are hidden from the ordinary conception of life. And yet only in those worlds can the facts be found which will reveal the truth about this very conception. And even if no answer proves all-embracing and final the answers obtained through the soul's inner pilgrimage go beyond everything which the outer senses and the intellect bound up with them can ever give. For this "something more" is necessary to man, and he will find that this is so, when he really and earnestly analyses

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his own nature.

At the outset of such a pilgrimage through the realms of our own soul, hard logic and common sense are necessary. They form a safe starting-point for pushing on into the supersensible realms, which the soul, after all, is yearning to reach. Many a soul would prefer not to trouble about such a starting-point, but rather penetrate directly into the supersensible realms; though every healthy soul, even if it has at first avoided such commonsense considerations as disagreeable, will always submit to them later. For however much knowledge of the supersensible worlds one may have obtained from another starting-point, one can only gain a firm footing there through some such methods of reasoning as follow here.

In the life of the soul moments may come in which it says to itself: "You must be able to withdraw from everything that an outer world can give you, if you do not wish to be forced into confessing that you are but self-contradictory nonsense; but this would make life impossible, because it is clear that what you perceive around you exists independently of you; it existed without you and will continue to exist without you. Why then do colours perceive themselves in you, whilst your perception may be of no consequence to them? Why do the forces and materials of the outer world build up your body? Careful thought will show that this body only acquires life as the outward manifestation of you. It is a part of the outer world transformed into you, and, moreover, you realise that it is necessary to you. Because, to begin with, you could have no inner experiences without your senses, which the body alone can put at your disposal. You would remain empty without your body, such as you are at the beginning. It gives you through the senses inner fullness and substance." And then all those reflections may follow which are essential to any human existence if it does not wish to get into unbearable contradiction with itself at certain moments which come to every human being. This body—as it exists at the present moment—is the expression of the soul's experience. Its processes are such as to allow the soul to live through it and to gain experience of itself in it.

A time will come, however, when this will not be so. The life in the body will some day be subject to laws quite different from those which it obeys today whilst living for you, and for the sake of your soul's experience. It will become subject to those laws, according to which the material and forces in nature are acting, laws which have nothing more to do with you and your life. The body to which you owe the experience of your soul, will be absorbed in the general world-process and exist there in a form which has nothing more in common with anything that you experience within yourself.

Such a reflection may call forth in the inner experience all the horror of the thought of death, but without the admixture of the merely personal feelings which are ordinarily connected with this thought. When such personal feelings prevail it is not easy to establish the calm, deliberate state of mind necessary for obtaining knowledge. It is natural that man should want to know about death and about a life of the soul independent of the dissolution of the body. But the relation existing between man himself and these questions is—perhaps more than anything else in the world—apt to confuse his objective judgment and to make him accept as genuine answers only those which are inspired by his own desires or wishes. For it is impossible to obtain true knowledge of anything in

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the spiritual realms without being able with complete unconcern to accept a "No" quite as willingly as a "Yes." And we need only look conscientiously into ourselves to become distinctly aware of the fact that we do not accept the knowledge of an extinction of the life of the soul together with the death of the body with the same equanimity as the opposite knowledge which teaches the continued existence of the soul beyond death. No doubt there are people who quite honestly believe in the annihilation of the soul on the extinction of the life of the body, and who arrange their lives accordingly. But even these are not unbiased with regard to such a belief. It is true that they do not allow the fear of annihilation, and the wish for continued existence, to get the better of the reasons which are distinctly in favour of such annihilation. So far the conception of these people is more logical than that of others who unconsciously construct or accept arguments in favour of a continued existence, because there is an ardent desire in the secret depths of their souls for such continued existence. And yet the view of those who deny immortality is no less biased, only in a different way.

There are amongst them some who build up a certain idea of what life and existence are. This idea forces them to think of certain conditions, without which life is impossible. Their view of existence leads them to the conclusion that the conditions of the soul's life can no longer be present when the body falls away. Such people do not notice that they have themselves from the very first fixed an idea of the conditions necessary for the existence of life, and cannot believe in a continuation of life after death for the simple reason that, according to their own preconceived idea, there is no possibility of imagining an existence without a body.

Even if they are not biased by their own wishes, they are biased by their own ideas from which they cannot emancipate themselves. Much confusion still prevails in such matters, and only a few examples need be put forward of what exists in this direction. For instance, the thought that the body, through whose processes the soul manifests its life, will eventually be given over to the outer world, and follow laws which have no relation to inner life—this thought puts the experience of death before the soul in such a way that no wish, no personal consideration, need necessarily enter the mind; and by a thought such as this we are led to a simple, impersonal question of knowledge. Then also the thought will soon dawn upon the mind that the idea of death is not important in itself, but rather because it may throw light upon life. And we shall have to come to the conclusion that it is possible to understand the riddle of life through the nature of death.

The fact that the soul desires its own continued existence should, under all circumstances, make us suspicious with regard to any opinion which the soul forms about its own immortality. For why should the facts of the world pay any heed to the feelings of the soul? It is a possible thought that the soul, like a flame produced from fuel, merely flashes forth from the substance of the body and is then again extinguished. Indeed, the necessity of forming some opinion about its own nature might perhaps lead the soul to this very thought, with the result that it would feel itself to be devoid of meaning. But nevertheless this thought might be the actual truth of the matter, even although it made the soul feel itself to be meaningless.

When the soul turns its eyes to the body, it ought only to take into consideration

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that which the body may reveal to it. It then seems as if in nature such laws were active as drive matter and forces into a continual process of change, and as if these laws controlled the body and after a while drew it into that general process of mutual change.

You may put this idea in any way you like: it may be scientifically admissible, but with regard to true reality it proves itself to be quite impossible. You may find it to be the only idea which seems scientifically clear and sensible, and that all the rest are only subjective beliefs. You may imagine that it is so, but you cannot adhere to this idea with a really unbiased mind. And that is the point. Not that which the soul according to its own nature feels to be a necessity, but only that which the outer world, to which the body belongs, makes evident, ought to be taken into consideration. After death this outer world absorbs the matter and forces of the body, which then follow laws that are quite indifferent to that which takes place in the body during life. These laws (which are of a physical and chemical nature) have just the same relation to the body as they have to any other lifeless thing of the outer world. It is impossible to imagine that this indifference of the outer world with regard to the human body should only begin at the moment of death, and should not have existed during life.

An idea of the relation between our body and the physical world cannot be obtained from life, but only from impressing upon our mind the thought that everything belonging to us as a vehicle of our senses, and as the means by which the soul carries on its life—all this is treated by the physical world in a way which only becomes clear to us when we look beyond the limits of our bodily life and take into consideration that a time will come when we no longer have about us the body in which we are now gaining experience of ourselves. Any other conception of the relation between the outer physical world and the body conveys in itself the feeling of not conforming with reality. The idea, however, that it is only after death that the real relationship between the body and the outer world reveals itself does not contradict any real experience of the outer or the inner world.

The soul does not feel the thought to be unendurable, that the matter and the forces of its body are given up to processes of the outer world which have nothing to do with its own life.

Surrendering itself to life in a perfectly unprejudiced way, it cannot discover in its own depths any wish arising from the body which makes the thought of dissolution after death a disagreeable one. The idea becomes unbearable only when it implies that the matter and the forces returning to the outer world take with them the soul and its experiences of its own existence. Such an idea would be unbearable for the same reason as would any other idea, which does not grow naturally out of a reliance on the manifestation of the outer world.

To ascribe to the outer world an entirely different relation to the existence of the body during life from that which it bears after death is an absolutely futile idea. As such it will always be repelled by reality, whereas the idea that the relation between the outer world and the body remains the same before and after death is quite sound. The soul, holding this latter view, feels itself in perfect harmony with the evidence of facts. It is

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able to feel that this idea does not clash with facts which speak for themselves, and to which no artificial thought need be added.

One does not always observe in what beautiful harmony are the natural healthy feelings of the soul with the manifestations of nature. This may seem so self-evident as not to need any remark, and yet this seemingly insignificant fact is most illuminating. The idea that the body is dissolved into the elements has nothing unbearable in it, but on the other hand, the thought that the soul shares the fate of the body is senseless. There are many human personal reasons which prove this, but such reasons must be left out of consideration in objective investigation.

Apart from these reasons, however, thoroughly impersonal attention to the teachings of the outer world shows that no different influence upon the soul can be ascribed to this outer world before death from that which it has after death. The fact is conclusive that this idea presents itself as a necessity and holds its own against all objections which may be raised against it. Any one who thinks this thought when fully self-conscious feels its direct truth. In fact, both those who deny and those who believe in immortality think in this way. The former will probably say that the conditions of the bodily processes during life are involved in the laws which act upon the body after death; but they are mistaken if they believe that they are really capable of imagining these laws to be in a different relation to the body during life when it is the vehicle of the soul from that which prevails after death.

The only idea possible in itself is that the special combination of forces which comes into existence with the body, remains quite as indifferent to the body in its character of a vehicle for the soul, as that combination of forces which produces the processes in the dead body. This indifference is not existent on the part of the soul, but on the part of the matter and the forces of the body. The soul gains experience of itself by means of the body, but the body lives with, in, and through the outer world and does not allow any more importance to the soul as such than to the processes of the outer world. One comes to the conclusion that the heat and cold of the outer world have an influence upon the circulation of the blood in our body which is analogous to that of fear and shame which exist within the soul.

So, first of all, we feel within ourselves the laws of the outer world active in that special combination of materials which manifests itself as the form of the human body. We feel this body as a member of the outer world, but remain ignorant of its inner workings. External science of the present day gives some information as to how the laws of the outer world combine within that particular entity, which presents itself as the human body. We may hope that this information will grow more complete in the future. But such increasing information can make no difference whatever to the way in which the soul has to think of its relation to the body. It will, on the contrary, bring more and more into evidence that the laws of the outer world remain in the same relation to the soul before and after death. It is an illusion to expect that the progress of the knowledge of nature will show how far the bodily processes are agents of the life of the soul. We shall more and more clearly recognise that which takes place in the body during life, but the processes in question will always be felt by the soul as being outside it in the same way as

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the processes in the body after death.

The body must therefore appear within the outer world as a combination of forces and substances, which exists by itself and is explainable by itself as a member of this outer world.

Nature causes a plant to grow and again decomposes it. Nature rules the human body, and causes it to pass away within her own sphere. If man takes up his position to nature with such ideas, he is able to forget himself and all that is in him and feel his body as a member of the outer world. If he thinks in such a way of its relations to himself and to nature, he experiences in connection with himself that which we may call his physical body.

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Second Meditation

In which the Attempt is made to form a True Conception of the Elemental or Etheric Body

THROUGH the idea which the soul has to form in connection with the fact of death, it may be driven into complete uncertainty with regard to its own being. This will be the case when it believes that it cannot obtain knowledge of any other world but the world of the senses and of that which the intellect is able to ascertain about this world. The ordinary life of the soul directs its attention to the physical body. It sees that body being absorbed after death into the workshop of nature, which has no connection with that which the soul experiences before death as its own existence. The soul may indeed know (through the preceding Meditation) that the physical body during life bears the same relation to it as after death, but this does not lead it further than to the acknowledgment of the inner independence of its own experiences up to the moment of death.

What happens to the physical body after death is evident from observation of the outer world. But such observation is not possible with regard to its inner experience. In so far then as it perceives itself through the senses, the soul in its ordinary life cannot see beyond the boundary of death. If the soul is incapable of forming any ideas which go beyond that outer world which absorbs the body after death, then with regard to all that concerns its own being it is unable to look into anything but empty nothingness on the other side of death.

If this is to be otherwise, the soul must perceive the outer world by other means than those of the senses and of the intellect connected with them. These themselves belong to the body and decay together with it. What they tell us can lead to nothing but to the result of the first Meditation, and this result consists merely in the soul being able to say to itself: "I am bound to my body. This body is subject to natural laws which are related to me in the same way as all other natural laws.

Through them I am a member of the outer world and a part of this world is expressed in my body, a fact which I realise most distinctly, when I consider what the outer world does to that body after death. During life it gives me senses and an intellect which make it impossible for me to see how matters stand with regard to my soul's experiences on the other side of death." Such a statement can only lead to two results. Either any further investigation into the riddle of the soul is suppressed and all efforts to obtain

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knowledge on this subject are given up; or else efforts are made to obtain by the inner experience of the soul that which the outer world refuses. These efforts may bring about an increase of power and energy with regard to this inner experience such as it would not have in ordinary life.

In ordinary life man has a certain amount of strength in his inner experiences, in his life of feeling and thought. He thinks, for instance, a certain thought as often as there is an inner or outer impulse to do so.

Any thought may, however, be chosen out of the rest and voluntarily repeated again and again without any outer reason, and with such intense energy as actually to make it live as an inner reality. Such a thought may by repeated effort be made the exclusive object of our inner experience. And while we do this we can keep away all outer impressions and memories which may arise in the soul. It is then possible to turn such a complete surrender to certain thoughts or feelings exclusive of all others, into a regular inner activity. If, however, such an inner experience is to lead to really important results, it must be undertaken according to certain tested laws. Such laws are recorded by the science of spiritual life. In my book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment*, a great number of these rules or laws are mentioned. Through such methods we obtain a strengthening of the powers of inner experience. This experience becomes in a certain way condensed. What is brought about by this we learn through that observation of ourselves which sets in when the inner activity described has been continued for a sufficiently long time. It is true that much patience is required before convincing results appear.

And if we are not disposed to exercise such patience for years, we shall obtain nothing of importance. Here it is only possible to give one example of such results, for they are of many varieties. And that which is mentioned here is adapted to further the particular method of meditation which we are now describing.

A man may carry out the inner strengthening of the life of his soul which has been indicated for a long period without perhaps anything happening in his inner life which is able to alter his usual way of thinking with regard to the world. Suddenly, however, the following may occur. Naturally the incident to be described might not occur in exactly the same way to two different persons.

But if we arrive at a conception of one experience of this kind, we shall have gained an understanding of the whole matter in question. A moment may occur in which the soul gets an inner experience of itself in quite a new way. At the beginning it will generally happen that the soul during sleep wakes up, as it were, in a dream. But we feel at once that this experience cannot be compared with ordinary dreams. We are completely shut off from the world of sense and intellect, and yet we feel the experience in the same way as when we are standing fully awake before the outer world in ordinary life. We feel compelled to picture the experience in ourselves. For this purpose we use ideas such as we have in ordinary life, but we know very well that we are experiencing things different from those to which such ideas are normally attached.

These ideas are only used as a means of expression for an experience which we

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have not had before, and which we are also able to know that it is impossible for us to have in ordinary life.

We feel, for instance, as though thunderstorms were all around us. We hear thunder and see lightning. And yet we know we are in our own room. We feel permeated by a force previously quite unknown to us. Then we imagine we see rents in the walls around us, and we feel compelled to say to ourselves or to some one we think is near us. "I am now in great difficulties, the lightning is going through the house and taking hold of me; I feel it seizing and dissolving me." When such a series of representations has been gone through, the inner experience passes back to ordinary soul-conditions. We find ourselves again in ourselves with the memory of the experience just undergone. If this memory is as vivid and accurate as any other, it enables us to form an opinion of the experience. We then have a direct knowledge that we have gone through something which cannot be experienced by any physical sense nor by ordinary intelligence, for we feel that the description just given and communicated to others or to ourselves is only a means of expressing the experience. Although the expression is a means of understanding the fact of the experience, it has nothing in common with it. We know that we do not need any of our senses in having such an experience.

One who attributes it to a hidden activity of the senses or of the brain, does not know the true character of the experience. He adheres to the description which speaks of lightning, thunder, and rents in the walls, and therefore he believes that this experience of the soul is only an echo of ordinary life. He must consider the thing as a vision in the ordinary sense of the word. He cannot think otherwise. He does not take into consideration, however, that when one describes such an experience one only uses the words lightning, thunder, rents in the walls as pictures of that which has been experienced, and that one must not mistake the pictures for the experience itself. It is true that the matter appears to one as if one really saw these pictures. But one did not stand in the same relation to the phenomenon of the lightning in this case as when seeing a flash with the physical eye. The vision of the lightning is only something which, as it were, conceals the experience itself; one looks through the lightning to something beyond which is quite different, to something which cannot be experienced in the outer world of sense.

In order that a correct judgment may be made possible, it is necessary that the soul which has such experiences should, when they are over, be on a thoroughly sound footing with regard to the ordinary outer world. It must be able clearly to contrast what it has undergone as a special experience, with its ordinary experience of the outer world. Those who in ordinary life are already disposed to be carried away by all kinds of wild imaginings regarding things, are most unfit to form such a judgment. The more sound—or one might say sober—a sense of reality we have got the more likely we are to form a true and, therefore, valuable judgment of such things.

One can only attain to confidence in supersensible experiences when one feels with regard to the ordinary world that one clearly perceives its processes and objects as they really are.

When all necessary conditions are thus fulfilled, and when we have reason to be-

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lieve that we have not been misled by an ordinary vision, then we know that we have had an experience in which the body was not transmitting perceptions. We have had direct perception through the strengthened soul without the body. We have gained the certainty of an experience when outside the body.

It is evident that in this sphere the natural differences between fancy or illusion and true observation made when outside the body, cannot be indicated in any other way than in the realm of outer sense perception. It may happen that some one has a very active imagination with regard to taste, and therefore, at the mere thought of lemonade, gets the same sensation as if he were really drinking it. The difference, however, in such a case becomes evident through the association of actual circumstances in life. And so it is also with those experiences which are made when we are out of the body. In order to arrive at a fully convincing conception in this sphere, it is necessary that we should become familiar with it in a perfectly healthy way and acquire the faculty of observing the details of the experience and correcting one thing by another.

Through such an experience as the one described, we gain the possibility of observing that which belongs to our proper self not only by means of the senses and intellect—in other words, the bodily instruments. Now we not only know something more of the world than those instruments will allow of, but we know it in a different way. This is especially important. A soul that passes through an inner transformation will more and more clearly comprehend that the oppressive problems of existence cannot be solved in the world of sense because the senses and the intellect cannot penetrate deeply enough into the world as a whole. Those souls penetrate deeper which so transform themselves as to be able to have experiences when outside the body; and it is in the records which they are able to give of their experiences that the means for solving the riddles of the soul can be found.

Now an experience that occurs when outside the body is of a quite different nature from one made when in the body. This is shown by the very opinion which may be formed about the experiences described, when, after it is over, the ordinary waking condition of the soul is reestablished and memory has come into a vivid and clear condition. The physical body is felt by the soul as separated from the rest of the world, and seems only to have a real existence in so far as it belongs to the soul. It is not so, however, with that which we experience within ourselves and with regard to ourselves when outside the body, for then we feel ourselves linked to all that may be called the outer world. All our surroundings are felt as belonging to us just as our hands do in the world of sense. There is no indifference to the world outside us when we come to the inner soul-world. We feel ourselves completely grown together, and woven into one with that which here may be called the world. Its activities are actually felt streaming through our own being. There is no sharp boundary line between an inner and an outer world. The whole environment belongs to the observing soul just as our two physical hands belong to our physical head.

In spite of this, however, we may say that a certain part of this outer world belongs more to ourselves than the rest of the environment, in the same way in which we speak of the head as independent of the hands or feet. Just as the soul calls a piece of the outer

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physical world its body, so when living outside the body it may also consider a part of the supersensible outer world as belonging to it. When we penetrate to an observation of the realm accessible to us beyond the world of the senses, we may very well say that a body unperceived by the senses belongs to us. We may call this body the elemental or etheric body, but in using the word “etheric” we must not allow any connection with that fine matter which science calls “ether” to establish itself in our mind.

Just as the mere reflection upon the connection between man and the outer world of nature leads to a conception of the physical body which agrees with facts, so does the pilgrimage of the soul into realms that can be perceived outside the physical body lead to the recognition of an elemental or etheric body, or body of formative forces.

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Third Meditation

In which the Attempt is made to form an Idea of Clairvoyant Cognition of the Elemental World

WHEN we have perceptions by means of the elemental body and not through the physical senses, we experience a world that remains unknown to perception of the senses and to ordinary intellectual thinking. If we wish to compare this world with something belonging to ordinary life, we shall find nothing more appropriate than the world of memory. Just as recollections emerge from the innermost soul, so also do the supersensible experiences of the elemental body. In the case of a memory-picture the soul knows that it is related to an earlier experience in the world of the senses. In a similar way the supersensible conception implies a relation. Just as the recollection by its very nature presents itself as something which cannot be described as a mere picture of the imagination, so does also the supersensible conception. The latter wrests itself from the soul's experience, but manifests itself immediately as an inner experience that is related to something external. It is by means of recollection that a past experience becomes present to the soul. But it is by means of a supersensible conception that something, which at some time can be found somewhere in the supersensible world, becomes an inner experience of the soul.

The very nature of Supersensible conceptions impresses upon our mind that they are to be looked upon as communications from a supersensible world manifesting within the soul.

How far we get in this way with our experiences in the supersensible world depends upon the amount of energy we apply to the strengthening of the life of our soul.

The attainment of the conviction that a plant is not merely that which we perceive in the world of the senses as well as the attainment of such a conviction with regard to the whole earth belongs to the same sphere of supersensible experience. If any one who has acquired the faculty of perception when outside his physical body, looks at a plant, he will be able to perceive—besides what his senses are showing him—a delicate form which permeates the whole plant. This form presents itself as an entity of force; and he is brought to consider this entity as that which builds up the plant from the materials and forces of the physical world, and which brings about the circulation of the sap. He may say—employing an available, although not an altogether appropriate simile—that there

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is something in the plant which sets the sap in motion in the same way as that in which his own soul moves his arm. He looks upon something internal in the plant, and he must allow a certain independence to this inner principle of the plant in its relation to that part which is perceived by the senses. He must also admit that this inner principle existed before the physical plant existed. Then if he continues to observe how a plant grows, withers, and produces seeds, and how new plants grow out of these, he will find the supersensible form of energy especially powerful, when he observes these seeds. At this period the physical being is insignificant in a certain respect, whereas the supersensible entity is highly differentiated and contains everything that, from the supersensible world, contributes to the growth of the plant.

Now in the same way by supersensible observation of the whole earth, we discover an entity of force which we can know with absolute certainty existed before everything came into being which is perceptible by the senses upon and within the earth. In this way we arrive at an experience of the presence of those supersensible forces which co-operated in forming and developing the earth in the past. What is thus experienced we may just as well call the etheric or elemental basic entities or bodies of the plant and of the earth, as we call the body through which we gain perception when outside the body, our own elemental or etheric body.

Even when we first begin to be able to observe in a supersensible way, we can assign elemental basic-entities of this kind to certain things and processes apart from their ordinary qualities, which are perceptible in the world of the senses. We are able to speak of an etheric body belonging to the plant or to the earth. However, the elemental beings, observed in this way are not by any means the only ones which reveal themselves to supersensible experience. We characterise the elemental body of a plant by saying that it builds up a form from the materials and forces of the physical world and thereby manifests its life in a physical body. But we may also observe beings that lead an elemental existence without manifesting their life in a physical body. Thus entities that are purely elemental are revealed to supersensible observation. It is not merely that we experience an addition, as it were, to the physical world; we experience another world in which the world of the senses presents itself as something which may be compared to pieces of ice floating about in water. A man who could only see the ice and not the water might quite possibly ascribe reality to the ice only and not to the water. Similarly, if we take into account only that which manifests itself to the senses, we may deny the existence of the supersensible world, of which the world of the senses is in reality a part, just as the floating pieces of ice are part of the water in which they are floating.

Now we shall find that those who are able to make supersensible observations describe what they behold by making use of expressions borrowed from the perceptions of sense. Thus we may find the elemental body of a being in the world of the senses, or that of a purely elemental being, described as manifesting itself as a self-contained body of light and having manifold colours.

These colours flash forth, glow or shine, and it appears that these phenomena of light and colour are the manifestation of its life. But that of which the observer is really speaking is altogether invisible, and he is perfectly aware that the light or colour picture

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which he gives, has no more to do with that which he actually perceives than, for instance, the writing in which a fact is communicated has to do with the fact itself. And yet the supersensible experience has not been expressed through arbitrarily chosen perceptions of the senses. The picture seen is actually before the observer, and is similar to an impression of the senses. This is so because, during supersensible experiences liberation from the physical body is not complete. The physical body is still connected with the elemental body, and brings the supersensible experience in a form drawn from the sense world. Thus the description given of an elemental being is given in the form of a visionary or fanciful combination of sense-impressions. But in spite of this, it is, when given in this manner, a true rendering of what has been experienced. For we have really seen what we are describing. The mistake that may be made is not in describing the vision as such, but in taking the vision for the reality, instead of that to which the vision points namely, the reality underlying it. A man who has never seen colours—a man born blind—will not, when he attains to the corresponding faculty of perception, describe elemental beings in such a way as to speak of flashing colours. He will make use of expressions familiar to him. To people, however, who are able to see physically, it is quite appropriate when they, in their description, make use of some such expression as the flashing forth of a colour form. By its aid they can give an impression of what has been seen by the observer of the elemental world. And this holds good not only for communications made by a clairvoyant—that is to say, one who is able to perceive by the aid of his elemental body—to a non-clairvoyant, but also for the intercommunication between clairvoyants themselves. In the world of the senses man lives in his physical body, and this body clothes the supersensible observations in forms perceptible to the senses. Therefore the expression of supersensible observations by making use of the sense-pictures they produce is, in ordinary earth-life, a useful means of communication.

The point is, that any one receiving communication experiences in his soul something bearing the right relation to the fact in question. Indeed, the pictures are only communicated in order to call forth an experience. Such as they really are, they cannot be found in the outer world. That is their characteristic and also the reason why they call forth experiences that have no relation to anything material.

At the beginning of his clairvoyance, the pupil will find it difficult to become independent of the sense picture. When his faculty becomes more developed, however, a craving will arise for inventing more arbitrary means of communicating what has been seen. These will involve the necessity for explaining the signs which he uses. The more the exigencies of our time demand the general diffusion of supersensible knowledge, the greater will be the necessity for clothing such knowledge in the expressions used in everyday life on the physical plane.

Now at certain times supersensible experiences may come upon the pupil of themselves. And he has then the opportunity of learning something about the supersensible world by personal experience according as he is more or less often favoured, as we may say, by that world through its shining into the ordinary life of his soul. A higher faculty however is that of calling forth at will clairvoyant perception from the soul-life. The path to the attainment of this faculty results ordinarily from energetic continuation of the inner

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strengthening of the soul-life, but much also depends upon establishing a certain keynote in the soul. A calm unruffled attitude of mind is necessary in regard to the supersensible world—an attitude which is as far removed on the one hand from the burning desire to experience the most possible in the clearest possible manner as it is from a personal lack of interest in that world. Burning desire has the effect of diffusing something like an invisible mist before the clairvoyant sight, whilst lack of interest acts in such a way that though the supersensible facts really do manifest themselves, they are simply not noticed. This lack of interest shows itself now and then in a very peculiar form. There are persons who honestly wish for supersensible experiences, but they form a priori a certain definite idea of what these experiences should be in order to be acknowledged as real. Then when the real experiences arrive, they flit by without being met by any interest, just because they are not such as one has imagined that they ought to be.

In the case of voluntarily produced clairvoyance there comes a moment in the course of the soul's inner activity when we know: now my soul is experiencing something that it never experienced before. The experience is not a definite one, but a general feeling that we are not confronting the outer world of the senses, nor are we within it, nor yet are we within ourselves as in the ordinary life of the soul. The outer and inner experiences melt into one, into a feeling of life, hitherto unknown to the soul, concerning which, however, the soul knows that it could not be felt if it were only living within the outer world by means of the senses or by its ordinary feelings and recollections. We feel, moreover, that during this condition of the soul something is penetrating into it from a world hitherto unknown. We cannot, however, arrive at a conception of this unknown something. We have the experience but can form no idea of it. Now we shall find that when we have such an experience we get a feeling as if there were a hindrance in our physical bodies preventing us from forming a conception of that which is penetrating into the soul.

If, however, we continue the inner efforts of our soul we shall, after a while, feel that we have overcome our own corporeal resistance. The physical apparatus of the intellect had hitherto only been able to form ideas in connection with experiences in the world of the senses. It is at the outset incapable of rising to a picture that which wants to manifest itself from out of the supersensible world. It must first be so prepared as to be able to do this. In the same way as a child is surrounded by the outer world, but has to have his intellectual apparatus prepared by experience in that world before he is able to form ideas of his surroundings, so is mankind in general unable to form an idea of the supersensible world. The clairvoyant who wishes to make progress prepares his own apparatus for forming ideas so that it will work on a higher level in exactly the same way as that of a child is prepared to work in the world of the senses. He makes his strengthened thoughts work upon this apparatus and as a consequence the latter is by degrees remodelled. He becomes capable of including the supersensible world in the realm of his ideas.

Thus we feel how through the activity of the soul we can influence and remodel our own body. In the beginning the body acts as a strong counterpoise to the life of the soul; we feel it as a foreign body within us. But presently we notice how it always adapts

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itself increasingly to the experiences of the soul; until, finally, we do not feel it any more at all, but find before us the supersensible world, just as we do not notice the existence of the eye with which we look upon the world of colours. The body then must become imperceptible before the soul can behold the supersensible world.

When we have in this way deliberately arrived at making the soul clairvoyant, we shall, as a rule, be able to reproduce this state at will if we concentrate upon some thought that we are able to experience within ourselves in a specially powerful manner. As a consequence of surrendering ourselves to such a thought we shall find that clairvoyance is brought about.

At first we shall not be able to see anything definite which we especially wish to see. Supersensible things or happenings for which we are in no way prepared, or desire to call forth, will play into the life of the soul. Yet, by continuing our inner efforts, we shall also attain to the faculty of directing the spiritual eye to such things as we wish to investigate. When we have forgotten an experience we try to bring it back to our memory by recalling to the mind something connected with the experience; and in the same way we may, as clairvoyants, start from an experience which we may rightly think is connected with what we want to find. In surrendering ourselves with intensity to the known experience, we shall often after a longer or shorter lapse of time find added to it that experience which it was our object to attain. In general, however, it is to be noted that it is of the very greatest importance for the clairvoyant quietly to wait for the propitious moment. We should not desire to attract anything. If a desired experience does not arrive, it is best to give up the search for a while and to try to get an opportunity another time. The human apparatus of cognition needs to develop calmly up to the level of certain experiences. If we have not the patience to await such development, we shall make incorrect or inaccurate observations.

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Fourth Meditation

In which the Attempt is made to form a Conception of the Guardian of the Threshold

WHEN the soul has attained the faculty of making observations whilst remaining outside the physical body, certain difficulties may arise with regard to its emotional life. It may find itself compelled to take up quite a different position towards itself from that to which it was formerly accustomed. The soul was accustomed to regard the physical world as outside itself, while it considered all inner experience as its own particular possession. To supersensible surroundings, however, it cannot take up the same position as to the outer world. As soon as the soul perceives the supersensible world around it, it must merge with it to a certain extent: it cannot consider itself as separate from these surroundings as it does from the outer world. Through this fact all that can be designated as our own inner world in relation to the supersensible surroundings assumes a certain character which is not easily reconcilable with the idea of inward privacy. We can no longer say, "I think," "I feel," or "I have my thoughts and fashion them as I like." But we must say instead, "Something thinks in me, something makes emotions flash forth in me, something forms thoughts and compels them to come forward in an absolutely definite way and make their presence felt in my consciousness."

Now this feeling may contain something exceedingly depressing when the manner in which the supersensible experience presents itself is such as to convey the certainty that we are actually experiencing a reality and are not losing ourselves in imaginary fancies or illusions. Such as it is it may indicate that the supersensible surrounding world wants to feel, and to think for itself, but that it is hindered in the realisation of its intention. At the same time we get a feeling that that which here wants to enter the soul is the true reality and the only one that can give an explanation of all we have hitherto experienced as real. This feeling also gives the impression that the supersensible reality shows itself as something which in value infinitely transcends the reality hitherto known to the soul. This feeling is therefore depressing, because it makes us feel that we are actually forced to will the next step which has to be taken. It lies in the very nature of that which we have become through our own inner experience to take this step. If we do not take it we must feel this to be a denial of our own being, or even self-annihilation. And yet we may also have the feeling that we cannot take it, or if we attempt it as far as we can, it must remain imperfect

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All this develops into the idea: Such as the soul now is, a task lies before it, which it cannot master, because such as it now is, it is rejected by its supersensible surroundings, for the supersensible world does not wish to have it within its realm. And so the soul arrives at a feeling of being in contradiction to the supersensible world; and has to say to itself: "I am not such as to make it possible for me to mingle with that world, and yet only there can I learn the true reality and my relation to it; for I have separated myself from the recognition of Truth." This feeling means an experience which will make more and more clear and decisive the exact value of our own soul. We feel ourselves and our whole life to be steeped in an error. And yet this error is distinct from other errors. The others are thought; but this is a living experience. An error that is only thought may be removed when the wrong thought is replaced by the right one. But the error that has been experienced has become part of the life of our soul itself; we ourselves are the error, we cannot simply correct it, for, think as we will, it is there, it is part of reality, and that, too, our own reality. Such an experience is a crushing one for the "self." We feel our inmost being painfully rejected by all that we desire. This pain, which is felt at a certain stage in the pilgrimage of the soul, is far beyond anything which can be felt as pain in the physical world.

And therefore it may surpass everything which we have hitherto become able to master in the life of our soul. It may have the effect of stunning us. The soul stands before the anxious question: Whence shall I gather strength to carry the burden laid upon me? And the soul must find that strength within its own life. It consists in something that may be characterised as inner courage, inner fearlessness.

In order now to be able to proceed further in the pilgrimage of the soul, we must have developed so far that the strength which enables us to bear our experiences will well up from within us and produce this inner courage and inner fearlessness in a degree never required for life in the physical body. Such strength is only produced by true self-knowledge. In fact it is only at this stage of development that we realise how little we have hitherto really known of ourselves. We have surrendered ourselves to our inner experiences without observing them as one observes a part of the outer world. Through the steps that have led to the faculty of extra-physical experience, however, we obtain a special means of self-knowledge. We learn in a certain sense to contemplate ourselves from a standpoint which can only be found when we are outside the physical body. And the depressing feeling mentioned before is itself the very beginning of true self-knowledge. To realise oneself as being in error in one's relations to the outer world is a sign that one is realising the true nature of one's own soul.

It is in the nature of the human soul to feel such enlightenment regarding itself as painful. It is only when we feel this pain that we learn how strong is the natural desire to feel ourselves, just as we are—to be human beings of importance and value. It may seem an ugly fact that this is so; but we have to face this ugliness of our own self without prejudice. We did not notice it before, just because we never consciously penetrated deeply enough into our own being. Only when we do so do we perceive how dearly we love that in ourselves which must be felt as ugly. The power of self-love shows itself in all its enormity. And at the same time we see how little inclination we have to lay aside this self-

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love. Even when it is only a question of those qualities of the soul which are concerned with our ordinary life and relations to other people, the difficulties turn out to be quite great enough. We learn, for instance, by means of true self-knowledge, that though we have hitherto believed that we felt kindly towards some one, nevertheless we are cherishing in the depths of our soul secret envy or hatred or some such feeling towards that person. We realise that these feelings, which have not as yet risen to the surface, will some day certainly crave for expression. And we see how very superficial it would be to say to ourselves: "Now that you have learned how it stands with you, root out your envy or hatred." For we discover that armed merely with such a thought we shall certainly feel exceedingly weak, when some day the craving to show our envy or to satisfy our hatred breaks forth as if with elemental power. Such special kinds of self-knowledge manifest themselves in different people according to the special constitution of their souls. They appear when experience outside the body begins, for then our selfknowledge becomes a true one, and is no longer troubled by any desire to find ourselves modelled in some such way as we should like to be.

Such special self-knowledge is painful and depressing to the soul, but if we want to attain to the faculty of experience outside the body, it cannot be avoided, for it is necessarily called forth by the special position which we must take up with regard to our own soul. For the very strongest powers of the soul are required, even if it is only a question of an ordinary human being obtaining self-knowledge in a general way. We are observing ourselves from a standpoint outside our previous inner life.

We have to say to ourselves: "I have contemplated and judged the things and occurrences of the world according to my human nature. I must now try to imagine that I cannot contemplate and judge them in that way. But then I should not be what I am. I should have no inner experiences. I should be a mere nothing." And not only a man in the midst of ordinary everyday life, who only very rarely even thinks about the world or life, would have to address himself in this way. Any man of science, or any philosopher, would have to do so. For even philosophy is only observation and judgment of the world according to individual qualities and conditions of the human soul-life. Now such a judgment cannot mingle with supersensible surroundings. It is rejected by them. And therewith everything we have been up to that moment is rejected. We look back upon our whole soul, upon our ego itself, as upon something which has to be laid aside, when we want to enter the supersensible world. The soul, however, cannot but consider this ego as its real being until it enters the supersensible worlds. The soul must consider it as the true human being, and must say to itself: "Through this my ego I have to form ideas of the world. I must not lose this ego of mine if I do not want to give myself up as a being altogether." There is in the soul the strongest inclination to guard the ego at all points in order not to lose one's foothold absolutely. What the soul thus feels of necessity to be right in ordinary life, it must no longer feel when it enters supersensible surroundings. It has there to cross a threshold, where it must leave behind not only this or that precious possession, but that very being which it has hitherto believed itself to be. The soul must be able to say to itself: "That which until now has seemed to me to be my surest truth, I must now, on the other side of the threshold of the supersensible world, be able to consider as my deepest error."

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Before such a demand the soul may well recoil. The feeling may be so strong that the necessary steps would seem a surrender of its own being, and an acknowledgment of its own nothingness, so that it admits more or less completely on the threshold its own powerlessness to fulfil the demands put before it. This acknowledgment may take all possible forms. It may appear merely as an instinct and seem to the pupil who thinks and acts upon it as something quite different from what it really is. He may, for instance, feel a great dislike to all supersensible truths. He may consider them as daydreams, or imaginary fancies. He does so only because in those depths of his soul of which he is ignorant he has a secret fear of these truths. He feels that he can only live with that which is admitted by his senses and his intellectual judgment. He therefore avoids arriving at the threshold of the supersensible world, and he veils the fact of his avoidance of it by saying: "That which is supposed to lie behind that threshold is not tenable by reason or by science." The fact is simply that he loves reason and science such as he knows them, because they are bound up with his ego. This is a very, frequent form of self-love and cannot as such be brought into the supersensible world.

It may also happen that there is not only this instinctive halt before the threshold. The pupil may consciously proceed to the threshold and then turn back, because he fears that which lies before him. He will then not easily be able to blot out from the ordinary life of his soul the effect of thus approaching it. The effect will be that weakness will spread over the whole of his soul's life.

What ought to take place is this, that the pupil on entering the supersensible world should make himself able to renounce that which in ordinary life he considers as the deepest truth and to adapt himself to a different way of feeling and judging things. But at the same time he must keep in mind that when he again confronts the physical world, he must make use of the ways of feeling, and judging that are suitable for this physical world. He must not only learn to live in two different worlds, but also to live in each in quite a different way, and he must not allow his sound judgment, which he needs for ordinary life in the world of reason and of the senses, to be encroached upon by the fact that he is obliged to make use of another kind of discernment while in another world.

To take up such a position is difficult for human nature, and the capacity for doing so is only acquired through continued energetic and patient strengthening of our soul-life. Any one who goes through the experiences of the threshold realises that it is a boon to the ordinary life of the soul not to be led so far. The feelings that awaken are such that one cannot but think that this boon proceeds from some powerful entity, who protects man from the danger of undergoing the dread of self-annihilation at the threshold. Behind the outer world of ordinary life there is another. Before the threshold of this world a stern guardian is standing, who prevents man from knowing what the laws of the supersensible world are. For all doubts and all uncertainty concerning that world are, after all, easier to bear than the sight of that which one must leave behind when we want to cross the threshold.

The pupil remains protected against the experience described, as long as he does not step forward to the very threshold. The fact that he receives descriptions of such experiences from those who have trodden or crossed this threshold does not change the

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fact of his being protected. On the contrary, such communications may be of good service to him when he approaches the threshold.

In this case as in many others, a thing is done better if one has an idea of it beforehand. But as regards the self-knowledge which must be gained by a traveller in the supersensible world nothing is changed by such preliminary knowledge. It is therefore not in harmony with the facts, when many clairvoyants, or those acquainted with the nature of clairvoyance, assert that these things should not be mentioned at all to people who are not on the point of resolving to enter into the supersensible world. We are now living in a time when people must become more and more acquainted with the nature of the supersensible world, if the life of their soul is to become equal to the demands of ordinary life upon it. The spread of supersensible knowledge, including the knowledge of the guardian of the threshold, is one of the tasks of the moment and of the immediate future.

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Fifth Meditation

In which the Attempt is made to form an Idea of the Astral Body

WHEN we experience through our elemental body a surrounding supersensible world, we feel ourselves less separated from that world than we are from physical surroundings when in our physical body. And yet we bear a relation to these supersensible surroundings, which may be expressed by saying that we have attached to ourselves certain substances of the elemental world in the form of an elemental body, just as in the physical outer world we carry some of its materials and forces attached to us in the shape of our physical body. We observe that this is so when we want to find our way about in the supersensible world outside the physical body. It may happen that we have before us some fact or being of the supersensible world. It may be there, and we can behold it, but we do not know what it is. If we are strong enough, we may drive it away, but only by carrying ourselves back into the world of the senses by energetic concentration upon our experiences in that world. We are, however, unable to remain in the supersensible world and compare with other beings or facts the being or the fact perceived. And yet it is only by so doing that we could form a correct estimate of what is beheld. Thus our "sight" in the supersensible world may be limited to the perception of single things without the faculty of moving freely from one thing to another. We then feel fettered to that single thing.

We may now look for the reason of this limitation. This can only be found when through further inner development the life of our soul has been still more strengthened and we arrive at a point when this limitation is no longer there. And then we shall discover that the reason why we could not move from one thing to another is to be found in our own soul. We learn that sight in the supersensible world differs in this way from perception in the world of the senses. One can, for instance, in the physical world see every visible thing when one has got sound eyes. If one sees one thing one can also, with the same eyes, see all other things. This is not so in the supersensible world. One can have the organ of supersensible perception developed in such a way that one can experience this or that fact, but if another fact is to be perceived one's organ must first be specially developed for this purpose. Such a development gives one the feeling that an organ has awoke to a particular region of the supersensible world. One feels as if one's elemental body were in a kind of sleep with regard to the supersensible world, and as if it had to be awoke with regard to each particular thing. It is in fact possible to speak of

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being asleep and being awake in the elemental world; but they are not alternate states as in the physical world.

They are states existing in man simultaneously. As long as we have not attained any faculty for experience through our elemental body, that body is asleep. We always carry this body about with us, but it is a sleeping body. With the strengthening of the life of our soul the awakening begins, but at first only for a part of the elemental body. The more we awaken our elemental being, the deeper we penetrate into the elemental world.

In the elemental world itself there is nothing that can aid the soul to bring about this awakening. However much may be beheld, one thing perceived adds nothing to the possibility of perceiving another thing. Free movement in the supersensible world can be attained by the soul through nothing that is found in the elemental environment. When we continue the exercises to strengthen the soul, we attain more and more this power of moving in particular regions.

Through all this our attention is drawn to something in ourselves, which does not belong to the elemental world, but is discovered within ourselves through our experience of that world. We feel ourselves as particular beings in the supersensible world, who seem to be the rulers, directors, and masters of their elemental bodies, and who by and by awaken these bodies to supersensible consciousness.

When we have arrived so far, a feeling of intense loneliness overwhelms the soul. We find ourselves in a world that is elemental in all directions; we see only ourselves within endless elemental space as beings which can nowhere find their equal. It is not affirmed that every development to clairvoyance should lead to this fearful loneliness, but any one who consciously and by his own efforts acquires a strengthening of his soul, will meet with it. And if he follow a teacher who gives him directions from step to step in order to further his development, he will, perhaps late, but still some day, have to realise that his teacher has left him all to himself. He will find that his teacher has left him, and that he is abandoned to loneliness in the elemental world.

Only afterwards will he understand that he has been obliged to let him depend upon himself since the necessity for such self-reliance had asserted itself. At this stage of the soul's pilgrimage the pupil feels himself an exile in the elemental world. But now he can go on further if sufficient force has been aroused in him through his inner exercises.

He may begin to see a new world emerge—not in the elemental world, but within himself – a world that is not one either with the physical or with the elemental world. For such a pupil a second supersensible world is added to the first. This second supersensible world is at first completely an inner world. The pupil feels that he carries it within himself and that he is alone with it. To compare this state to anything in the world of the senses, let us take the following case. Somebody has lost all his dear ones through death and now carries only the recollection of them in his soul. They live on for him only as his thoughts. Thus it is in the second supersensible world. Man stands to this second supersensible world in such a way that he carries it within himself; but he knows that he is shut out from its reality. Nevertheless he feels that this reality within his soul, whatever it may be, is something much more real than mere recollection from the world of the

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senses. This supersensible world lives an independent life within one's own soul. All that is there is yearning to get out of the soul, and arrive at something else. Thus one feels a world within oneself, but a world that does not want to remain there. This produces a feeling like being torn asunder by every separate detail of that world. One may arrive at a point where these details free themselves, where they break through something which seems like a shell and escape from the soul. Then one may feel oneself the poorer by all that has in this manner torn itself away from the soul.

One now learns that that part of the supersensible reality in the soul which one is able to love for its own sake, and not simply because it is actually in one's own soul, behaves in a particular way.

What one can thus love deeply does not tear itself from the soul; it certainly does force its way out of the soul, but carries the soul along with it. It carries the soul to that region where it lives in its true reality. A kind of union with the real essence takes place, for hitherto one has only carried something like a reflection of this real essence within one. The love here mentioned must, however, be of the kind that is experienced in the supersensible world. In the world of the senses one can only prepare oneself for such love. And this preparation takes place when one strengthens one's capacity for love in the world of the senses. The greater the love of which one is capable in the physical world, the more of this capacity remains for the supersensible world.

With regard to the individual entities of the supersensible world, this works as follows. You cannot, for instance, get into touch with those real supersensible beings which are connected with the plants of the physical world if you do not love plants in the world of the senses, and so on.

An error, however, may very easily arise with regard to such things. It may happen that somebody in the physical world passes the vegetable kingdom by with complete indifference, and yet an unconscious affinity for that kingdom may lie hidden in the soul. Afterwards when he enters the supersensible world this love may awaken.

But the union with beings in the supersensible world does not only depend upon love. Other feelings, as, for instance, respect and reverence, which the soul may have for a being when it first feels the picture of this being arise within it, have the same effect. These qualities will, however, always be such as must be reckoned as belonging to the inner qualities of the soul. One will in this way learn to know those beings of the supersensible world to which the soul itself opened the way through such inner qualities. A sure way to get acquainted with the supersensible world consists in gaining access to the different beings through one's relationship to their reflections. In the world of the senses we love a being after having learned to know him; in the second supersensible world we may love the image of a being before meeting with the being itself, as this image presents itself before the meeting takes place.

That which the soul in this way learns to know within itself is not the elemental body. It stands in relation to that body as its "awakener." It is a being dwelling within the soul which is experienced in the same way as that in which you would experience yourself during sleep if you were not unconscious but felt yourself to be conscious when

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outside your physical body and in the position of its “awakener” at the moment of its rousing from sleep. Thus the soul learns to know a being within itself which is a third something beside the physical and the elemental bodies. Let us call this something the astral body, and this expression shall, for the time being, mean nothing but that which in the way described is experienced within the being of the soul.

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Sixth Meditation

In which the Attempt is made to form a Conception of the Ego-Body or Thought-Body

THE feeling of being outside our physical body is stronger during experiences within the astral body than during those within the elemental body. In the case of the elemental body we feel ourselves outside the region in which the physical body exists, and yet we feel connected with the latter body. In the astral body we feel the physical body itself as something outside our own being. On passing into the elemental body we feel something like an expansion of our own being; but in identifying our consciousness with the astral body it is as though we made a jump into another being. And we feel a world of spiritual beings sending their activities into that being.

We feel ourselves in some way or other connected with or related to these beings. And by degrees we learn to know how these beings are mutually connected. To our human consciousness the world widens out in the direction of the spiritual. We behold spiritual beings, for example, who bring about the succession of epochs in the development of mankind so that we realise that the different characters of the different epochs are, as it were, stamped upon them by real spiritual entities. These are the Spirits of Time or Primordial Powers (Archai). We learn to know other beings, whose psychic life is such that their thoughts are at the same time active forces of nature. We are led to understand that only to physical perception do the forces of nature appear to be constituted as physical perception imagines them to be. That in fact everywhere, where a force of nature is acting, the thought of some being is expressing itself just as a human soul finds expression in the movement of a hand. All this is not as though man by the aid of any theory is able in thought to place living beings at the back of nature's processes; when we realise ourselves in our astral body we enter into quite as concrete and real a relation to those beings as that between human individuals in the physical world. Among the spirits into whose realm we thus penetrate we discover a series of gradations, and we may thus speak of a world of higher hierarchies. Those beings whose thoughts manifest themselves to physical perception as forces of nature we may call Spirits of Form.

Experience in that world assumes that we feel our physical being as something outside us, in the same way as in physical existence we look upon a plant as a thing outside ourselves. We shall feel this state of being outside all that in ordinary life must be felt as the whole compass of our own being, as a very painful one, so long as it is not

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accompanied by a certain other experience.

If the inner work of the soul has been energetically carried on and has led to a proper deepening and strengthening of the life of our soul, it is not necessary that this pain should be very pronounced. For a slow and gradual entrance into that second experience may be accomplished simultaneously with our entrance into the astral body as our natural vehicle.

This second experience will consist in obtaining the capacity for considering all that, which before filled and was connected with our own soul, as a kind of recollection, so that we stand in the same relation to our own former ego as we do to our recollections in the physical world. Only through such an experience do we attain to full consciousness of ourselves as truly living with our own real being in a world quite different from that of the senses. We now possess the knowledge that that which we carry about with us and have hitherto considered as our ego is something different from what we really are. We are now able to stand opposite to ourselves, and we may form an idea concerning that which now confronts our own soul and of which it formerly said, "That is myself." Now the soul no longer says, "That is myself," but, "I am carrying that something about with me." Just as the ego in ordinary life feels independent of its own recollections, so our newly-found ego feels itself independent of our former ego. It feels that it belongs to a world of purely spiritual beings. And as this experience—a real experience: no mere theory—comes to us, so we realise what that really is which we hitherto considered as our ego. It presents itself as a web of recollections, produced by the physical, the elemental, and the astral bodies in the same way as an image is produced by a mirror. Just as little as a man identifies himself with his rejected picture, so little does the soul, experiencing itself in the spiritual world, identify itself with that which it experiences of itself in the world of the senses. The comparison with the rejected image is, of course, to be taken merely as a comparison.

For the reflected image vanishes when we change our position with regard to the mirror. The web woven of recollections and representing what we in the physical world consider as our own being, has a greater degree of independence than the image in the mirror. It has in a certain way a being of its own. And yet to the real being of the soul it is only like a picture of our real self. The real being of the soul feels that this picture is needed for the manifestation of its real self. This real being knows that it is something different, but also that it would never have attained to any real knowledge of itself if it had not at first realised itself as its own image within that world, which, after its ascent into the spiritual world, becomes an outer world.

The web of recollection which we now regard as our former ego may be called the "ego-body" or "thought-body." The word "body" must in this connection be taken in a wider sense than that which is usually called a "body." By "body" is here meant all that we experience as belonging to us and of which we do not say, "We are it," but, "We possess it."

Only when clairvoyant consciousness has arrived at the point where it experiences, as a sum of recollections, that which it formerly considered to be itself, does it

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become possible to acquire real experience of what is hidden behind the phenomenon of death. For then we have arrived at a truly real world in which we feel ourselves as beings who are able to retain, as though in a memory, what has been experienced in the world of the senses. This sum total of experiences in the physical world needs—in order to continue its existence—a being who is able to retain it in the same way in which the ordinary ego retains its recollections. Supersensible knowledge discloses that man has an existence within the world of spiritual beings, and that it is he himself who keeps within him his physical existence as a recollection. The question what after death will become of all that I now am, receives the following answer from clairvoyant investigation: “You will continue to be yourself just to that extent to which you realise that self to be a spiritual being amongst other spiritual beings.”

We realise the nature of these spiritual beings and amongst them our own nature. And this knowledge is direct experience. Through it we know that spiritual beings, and with them our own soul, have an existence of which the physical existence is but a passing manifestation. If to ordinary consciousness it appears—as shown in the First Meditation—that the body belongs to a world whose real part in it is proved by its dissolution therein after death, clairvoyant observation teaches us that the real human ego belongs to a world to which it is attached by bonds quite different from those which connect the body with the laws of nature. The bonds which attach the ego to the spiritual beings of the supersensible world are not touched in their innermost character either by birth or by death. In physical existence these bonds only show themselves in a special way. That which appears in this world is the expression of realities of a supersensible nature.

Now as man as such is a supersensible being, and also appears so to supersensible observation, so the bonds between souls in the supersensible world are not affected by death. And that anxious question which comes before the ordinary consciousness of the soul in this primitive form: “Shall I meet again after death those with whom I know I have been connected during physical existence?” must, by any real investigator, who is entitled to form a judgment based upon experience, be emphatically answered in the affirmative.

Everything that has been said of the being of the soul experiencing itself as a spiritual reality within the world of other spiritual beings, may be seen and confirmed if we strengthen the life of our soul in the way mentioned before. And it is possible to make this easier and to help oneself along by the development of special feelings. In ordinary life in the physical world we take up such a position to all that we feel to be our fate, as to feel sympathy or antipathy for different occurrences. A self-observer, who is able to remain quite unbiased, must admit that these sympathies and antipathies are some of the strongest that man is able to feel. Ordinary reflection upon the fact that everything in life is a result of necessity, and that we have to bear our fate, may certainly take us a long way towards a deliberate attitude of mind in life. But in order to be able to grasp something of the real being of man still more is required. The reflection described will do excellent service in the life of our soul.

We may, however, often find that those sympathies and antipathies of the kind mentioned, which we have been able to discard, have only disappeared from our imme-

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diate consciousness. They have retired into the deeper strata of human nature and manifest themselves as a certain mood of the soul or as a feeling of slackness or some other such sensation in the body. Real imperturbability with regard to fate is only acquired when we behave in this matter in just the same way as in the repeated concentrated surrender to thoughts or feelings for the purpose of strengthening the soul in general. A reflection only leading to intellectual understanding is not sufficient. It is necessary to live intensely with such a reflection, and to continue in it for a certain period of time while keeping away all experiences appertaining to the senses or other recollections of ordinary life. Through such exercises we arrive at a certain fundamental attitude of mind towards fate. It is possible radically to do away with sympathies and antipathies in this respect and finally to consider everything that happens to us quite as unconcernedly as an observer watches water falling over a mountainside and splashing down beneath. It is not meant that in this way we ought to arrive at facing our own fate without any feelings whatever.

One who becomes indifferent to anything that happens to him is surely on no profitable track. We certainly do not remain indifferent to the outer world with regard to things not touching our own soul as part of our fate. We look upon things happening before our eyes with pleasure or with pain. Indifference to life should not be sought, when we strive after supersensible knowledge, but transformation of the direct interest that the ego takes in its own fate. It is quite possible that by such transformation the vividness of the life of feeling is strengthened and not weakened. In ordinary life tears are shed over many things that happen to our own soul in the way of fate. We are, however, able to win our way to a standpoint where the unfortunate fate of others awakens in our soul the same keen interest and feeling as are induced by our own unhappy experiences. It is easier to arrive at such a standpoint with regard to misfortunes that fate brings us than, for example, with regard to our mental capacities. It is not so easy, after all, to experience as great a joy when you discover a capacity in another, as when you discover that you possess that capacity yourself.

When self-observation strives to penetrate into the depths of the soul, much selfish satisfaction with many things which we can do ourselves may be discovered. An intense, repeated meditative union with the thought, that in many instances it is quite indifferent to the course of human life whether we ourselves or others are able to do certain things, may carry us a long way towards true imperturbability with regard to that which we feel to be the innermost working of fate in our own lives. Such inner reinforcement of the life of our soul, by steeping it in thought, when rightly done, can never lead to a mere blunting of our feeling for our own capacities. Instead they are transformed and we realise the necessity of behaving in accordance with these capacities.

And here we have already indicated the direction taken by this strengthening of the life of the soul by thought. We learn to realise something in ourselves which appears to the soul as a second being within it. This becomes especially manifest, when we connect with it thoughts which show how in ordinary life we bring about this or that event in our destiny. We are able to see that this or that would not have happened to us, if we had not behaved in a certain way at an earlier period in our life. What happens to us today is

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truly in many ways the result of what we did yesterday.

We may now, with the intention of carrying our soul's experience further than some point at which we have arrived, look back upon our past experience. We may then search out all that shows how we ourselves have prepared our later destinies. We may try in so doing to go back so far as to reach that point where the consciousness awakens in the child, which enables it later in life to remember what it has experienced. If we set about this retrospect in such a way that we combine with it an attitude of mind which eliminates the usual selfish sympathies and antipathies with regard to occurrences in our own destiny, then, having reached in memory the above-mentioned point in our childhood, we face ourselves in such a way as to be able to say: At that time the possibility of feeling ourselves in ourselves and of conscious work upon the life of our soul first presented itself; but this ego of ours was there before, and it, although not working consciously within us, has brought us our capacity for knowledge as well as everything we now know.

The attitude towards our own destiny just described brings about what no intellectual reflection is able to produce. We learn to look at the events of destiny with equanimity; we meet them with an unprejudiced mind; but we see in the being who brings these happenings upon us our own self. And when we look upon ourselves in this way, we find that the conditions of our own destiny, already given us at birth, are connected with our own self. We win our way to the conviction that just as we have worked upon ourselves since the awakening of our consciousness, so we had already been working before our present consciousness awoke. Now such a working of ourselves up to the realisation of a higher ego-being within the ordinary ego leads us not only to admit that our thoughts have brought us to a theoretical statement of the existence of such a higher ego, but also makes us realise as a power within ourselves the living activity of this ego in all its reality and feel the ordinary ego as a creation of the other.

This feeling is, in fact, the first step towards beholding the spiritual being of the soul. And if it leads to nothing, it is because we rest satisfied with the beginning only. This beginning may be a scarcely perceptible dull sensation. It may remain so perhaps for a long time. But if we strongly and energetically pursue the course which has led us up to this beginning, we shall at last arrive at beholding the soul as a spiritual being. And having brought ourselves thus far we shall easily understand why some one, without any experience in these matters, may say that in believing we see such things we have only created an imaginative picture of a higher ego through autosuggestion. But one who has had the experience knows that such an objection can only be derived from lack of this very experience. For those who seriously go through this development acquire at the same time the capacity to distinguish between realities and the pictures of their own imagination. The inner activities and experiences which are necessary during such a pilgrimage of the soul, if it is a right one, make us practise the greatest circumspection towards ourselves with regard to imagination and reality. When we systematically strive to attain the experience of ourselves in the higher ego as spiritual beings, we shall consider as the principal experience that which is described at the beginning of this meditation and look upon the rest as a help to the soul on its pilgrimage.

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Seventh Meditation

In which the Attempt is made to form an Idea of the Character of Experience in Supersensible Worlds

THE experiences that showed themselves to be necessary for the soul, if it wants to penetrate into supersensible worlds, may seem deterrent to many people. These may say they do not know what would befall them if they ventured upon such processes, or how they would be able to stand them. Under the influence of such a feeling the opinion is very easily formed that it is better not to interfere artificially with the development of the soul, but calmly to surrender to the guidance of which the soul remains unconscious, and to await its effect in the future upon one's inner life.

Such a thought must, however, always be repressed by a person who is able to make another thought a living power within him; namely, that it is natural to human nature to progress, and that if no attention were paid to these things it would mean disloyally consigning to stagnation forces in the soul which are waiting to be unfolded. Forces of self-unfolding are present in every human soul, and there cannot be a single one that would not listen to the call for unfolding them if in some way or other it could learn something about these powers and their importance.

Moreover, nobody will allow himself to be deterred from the ascent into higher worlds unless beforehand he has taken up a false position towards the processes through which he has to go.

These processes are described in the preceding meditations. And if they are to be expressed by words which must naturally be taken from ordinary human existence, they can be rightly expressed only in that way. For experiences on the supersensible path of knowledge are related to the human soul in such a way that they are exactly similar to what, for example, a highly-strung feeling of loneliness, a feeling of hovering over an abyss and the like may mean to the soul of man. Through the experience of such feelings and sensations the powers to tread the path of knowledge are produced. They are the germs of the fruits of supersensible knowledge. All these experiences in a certain way carry something in themselves which lies hidden deep within them,

When they are experienced this hidden element is brought to a state of the utmost tension, something bursts the feeling of loneliness, which surrounds this hidden "something" like a veil, and it then pushes forward into the soul's life as a means of knowledge.

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One must, however, take into consideration that when the right path is entered upon, something else at once presents itself behind every such experience. When the one has occurred, the other cannot fail to appear. When anything has to be borne there is at once added the power to bear it steadfastly if we will only reflect calmly on this power and also take time to notice that which wants to manifest itself in the soul. When something painful appears, and when at the same time there is a sure feeling in the soul that forces are to be found which will make the pain bearable and with which we are able to connect ourselves, we are then able to take up such a position towards experiences, which would be unbearable in the course of our ordinary life, so that we seem to be the spectator of ourselves in all such experiences. And thus people who, whilst on their way towards supersensible knowledge, pass through many a rise and fall of great waves of feeling, show nevertheless perfect equanimity in ordinary life. It is of course quite possible that experiences that are made within also react upon the state of mind in outer life in the physical world, so that for a time we do not come into harmony with ourselves and with life in the way which was possible before we entered upon the path of knowledge. We are then obliged to draw from that which has already been obtained within ourselves such forces as make it possible again to find the balance. And if the path of knowledge be rightly trod no situation can arise in which this would not be possible.

The best path of knowledge will always be the one that leads to the supersensible world through strengthening or condensing the life of the soul by means of concentration on inner meditations during which certain thoughts or feelings are retained in the mind. In this case it is not a question of experiencing a thought or an emotion as we do in order to find our way in the physical world, but the point is to live entirely with and within the thought or emotion, concentrating all the powers of our soul in it, so that it entirely fills the consciousness during the time of retirement within ourselves. We think, for instance, of a thought which has given to the soul a conviction of some kind; we at first leave on one side any power of conviction it may have, and only live with it and in it again and again so as to become one with it. It is not necessary that it should be a thought of things belonging to the higher worlds, although such a thought is more effective. For inner meditation we can even use a thought which pictures an ordinary experience. Fruitful for instance, are emotions which represent resolutions with regard to deeds of love, and which we kindle within ourselves to the highest degree of human warmth and sincere experience. Effective—especially where knowledge is concerned—are symbolic representations, gained from life, or accepted on the advice of such persons as are in a certain way experts in these matters, because they know the fruitfulness of the means employed from what they themselves have gained by them.

Through these meditations, that must become a habit, nay, a necessity of life, just as breathing is necessary for the life of the body, we shall concentrate the powers of the soul, and by concentrating strengthen them. Only we must succeed during the time of inner meditation in remaining in such a state that neither outer impressions of the senses nor any recollections of such play upon the soul.

Recollections also of all that we have experienced in ordinary life, all that gives pleasure or pain to the soul, must remain silent so that the soul may surrender itself ex-

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clusively to that which we ourselves determine shall occupy it. The capacities for supersensible knowledge grow legitimately only out of that which we have acquired in this way by inner meditations, the content and the form of which have been fixed by the power of our own soul. The important point is not the source whence we derive the object of the meditation; we may take it from an expert in these matters or from the literature of spiritual science; the important point is to make its substance an inner experience of our own life and not merely to choose it out from thoughts which may arise in our own soul, or from things which we feel inclined to consider as the best objects for meditation. Such an object has but little power, because the soul is already familiar with it and cannot consequently make the necessary effort in order to become one with it. It is in making this effort, however, that the effective means of acquiring the faculties for supersensible knowledge are to be found, and not in the mere fact of becoming one with the substance of the meditation as such.

We can also arrive at supersensible sight in other ways. People may arrive at fervent meditation and inner experience by reason of their whole constitution. And so they may be able to liberate powers for acquiring supersensible knowledge in their soul. Such powers may all of a sudden manifest themselves in souls which do not seem at all predetermined for such experiences. In the most varied ways the supersensible life of the soul may awaken; but we can only arrive at an experience of which we are the masters as we are the masters of ourselves in ordinary life, if we tread the path of knowledge here described. Any other irruption of the supersensible world into the experiences of the soul will mean that such experiences enter in as it were forcibly, and the person in question will either lose himself in them, or lay himself open to every conceivable kind of deception with regard to their value, their true meaning, and their importance within the real supersensible world.

It is most important to keep in mind that on the path to supersensible knowledge the soul changes. It may be the case that in ordinary life in the physical world, we are not at all inclined to fall into any kind of illusion or deception, but that on entering the supersensible world we fall victims to such deceptions and illusions in the most credulous manner. It may also happen that in the physical world we have a very good and sound feeling for truth, and understand that we must not think only in such a way of a thing or an occurrence as to satisfy our own egoism in order to judge it rightly; yet in spite of this we may arrive at seeing in the supersensible world only what pleases our egoism.

We must remember how this egoism colours all that we behold. We are observing only that to which our egoism is directing its gaze in accordance with its own inclinations, though perhaps we may not realise that it is egoism which is directing our spiritual sight. And it is then quite natural that we should take what we see for truth. Protection against this can only be obtained if, on the path to supersensible knowledge through earnest self-observation, and through an energetic striving for clearer self-knowledge, we more and more develop our capacity to discern truly how much egoism is to be found in our own soul and where it is finding utterance. Only then we shall be able to emancipate ourselves by degrees from the leadership of this egoism if in our meditation we

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forcibly and relentlessly put before ourselves the possibility of our soul being in this or that respect under its domination.

It belongs to the unhampered mobility of the soul in higher worlds that it should make clear to itself in what a different manner certain qualities of the soul react upon the spiritual world from that in which they do in the physical world. This becomes especially evident when we direct our attention to the moral qualities of the soul. Within the physical world we distinguish between the laws of nature and those of morality. When we want to explain natural processes we cannot make use of moral ideas. We explain a poisonous plant according to natural law, and we do not condemn it morally for being poisonous. We clearly understand that, with regard to the animal kingdom, there can, at the most, be only a question of something resembling morality, and that a moral judgment in the strict sense could only disturb the main issue. It is in circumstances of human life that moral judgment about the worth of existence begins to be of importance. Man himself makes his own value dependent on this judgment, when he comes so far that he is able to judge himself impartially. Nobody, however, would dream of considering the laws of nature as identical with or even similar to moral laws, if he considers physical existence in the right way.

As soon as we enter the higher worlds this is changed. The more spiritual the worlds which we enter, the more do moral law and what may be termed natural law in these worlds coincide. In the physical world we know that we are speaking figuratively when we say of an evil deed that it burns in the soul. We know that natural fire is quite a different thing. But such a distinction does not exist in the supersensible worlds; for there hate and envy are forces acting in such a way that we may term their effects the "natural laws" of that world. Hate and envy have there the effect that the being who is hated or envied reacts upon the hater or envier in a consuming, extinguishing manner, so that processes of destruction are established which are hurtful to the spiritual being. Love acts in such a way in spiritual worlds that its effect is an irradiation of warmth that is productive and helpful. This can already be observed in the elemental body of man. Within the sense-world the hand that commits an immoral action must in its activity be explained according to natural law quite in the same way as a hand that serves morality. But certain elemental parts of man remain undeveloped, when no corresponding moral feelings exist.

And we must account for the imperfect formation of elemental organs through imperfect moral qualities in the same way as natural processes are explained by natural law. On the other hand, we must never from the imperfect development of a physical organ draw the conclusion that the corresponding part of the elemental body must be imperfectly developed. We must always keep in mind that in the different worlds different kinds of law prevail. A person may have a physical organ imperfectly developed; but at the same time the corresponding elemental organ may be not only normally perfect, but more perfect to the same extent as the physical one is imperfect. In a significant way does the difference between the supersensible and the physical worlds present itself in all that is connected with ideas of beauty and ugliness. The way in which these ideas are employed in physical existence loses all significance as soon as we enter

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supersensible worlds.

Beautiful, for instance – only that being can be called beautiful which succeeds in communicating all its inner experiences to the other beings of its world, so that they can take part in the totality of its experience. The capacity of manifesting all that lives within oneself, and of not having to hide away anything, might in higher worlds be called “beautiful.” And in these worlds this conception of beauty completely coincides with that of unreserved sincerity, of honest manifestation of that which a being carries within itself. Similarly that being might be called ugly which does not want to show outwardly its own inner content, and which holds back its own experience and hides itself from other beings with regard to certain qualities. Such a being withdraws from its spiritual surroundings. This conception of ugliness coincides with that of insincere manifestation of oneself. To lie and to be ugly are realities which in the spiritual world are identical, so that a being which appears ugly is a deceitful being.

What are known in the physical world as desires and wishes also appear with quite a different significance in the spiritual world. Desires which in the physical world arise from the inner nature of the human soul do not exist in the spiritual world. What may be termed desires in that world are kindled by that which is seen outside the being in question. A being which must feel that it has not a certain quality, which, according to that being's nature, it should have, beholds another being endowed with that quality. Moreover it cannot help having this other being always before it. As in the physical world the eye naturally sees what is visible, so in the supersensible world the want of a quality always carries a being into the neighbourhood of another being endowed with the quality in question. And the sight of this other being becomes a continual reproach that acts as a real force, making the being, who is hampered with the fault, desirous of amending it. This is a quite different experience from a desire in the physical world; for in the spiritual world free will is not interfered with through such circumstances. A being may oppose itself to that which the sight of something else will call forth within it. It will then succeed by degrees in being taken away from its model.

The consequence, however, will be that the being who opposes itself to its model will bring itself into worlds where the conditions of existence will be worse than those would have been which were given to it in the world for which it was in a certain way predestined.

All this shows the soul that its world of conceptions must be transformed when entering supersensible realms. Ideas must be changed, widened, and blended with others if we want to describe the supersensible world correctly. That is the reason why descriptions of supersensible worlds given in terms of the physical world without any alteration or transformation are always unsatisfactory. We may realise that it is the outcome of a correct human feeling, when we use, within the physical world—more or less symbolically or even as immediately applicable—ideas which only become fully significant with regard to supersensible worlds. Thus we may really feel lying to be ugly, but compared with the character of this idea in the supersensible world, such a use of words in the physical world is only a reflection, resulting from the fact that all the different worlds are related to one another, and these relations are dimly felt and unconsciously

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perceived in the physical world. Yet we must remember that in the physical world a lie, which we feel as ugly, is not necessarily ugly in its outer appearance, and that it would be a confusion of ideas if we were to explain ugliness in physical nature as the outcome of lying. In the supersensible world, however, anything false, seen in its right light, impresses itself upon us as being ugly in appearance. Here again possible deceptions have to be taken into consideration and guarded against. The soul may meet a being in the supersensible world which may rightly be characterised as evil, although it manifests itself in a form that must be called beautiful if judged according to the idea of the beautiful that we bring with us from the physical world. In such a case we shall not be able to judge correctly before we have penetrated to the heart of the being in question. We shall then discover that the “beautiful” manifestation was only a mask which does not harmonise with the nature of the being, and then that which we thought to be beautiful—according to ideas borrowed from the physical world—impresses itself with particular force upon our mind as ugly. And as soon as this happens, the “evil” being will no more be able to deceive us with its “beauty.” It must unveil itself to such a beholder in its true form, which can only be an imperfect expression of that which it is within. Such phenomena of the supersensible world make it especially evident how human conceptions must be transformed when we enter that world.

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Eighth Meditation

In which the Attempt is made to form an Idea of the Way in which Man beholds his Repeated Earth-Lives

WE are not really entitled to speak of dangers during the pilgrimage of the soul through supersensible worlds, when this pilgrimage is undertaken in the right way. The method would not lead to its goal if amongst the psychic instructions given there were those which created dangers for the pupil. The goal is rather to make the soul strong, to concentrate its forces, so that man should become able to bear his soul's experiences, which he has to go through when he wants to see and understand other worlds than the physical. Moreover, an essential difference between the physical world and the supersensible worlds is that beholding, perceiving, and understanding are related to one another in quite a different way in the two worlds. When we hear about some part of the physical world, we have a certain right to feel that we can only arrive at a complete understanding of it through beholding and perceiving it. We do not believe we have understood a landscape or a picture until we have seen it. But the supersensible worlds can be thoroughly understood when with unbiased judgment we accept a correct description of them. In order to understand and to experience all the forces for the strengthening and fulfilment of life which belong to spiritual worlds, we only need the descriptions of those who are able to see. Real knowledge of those worlds at first hand can only be obtained by those who are able to investigate when outside their physical body. Descriptions of the spiritual worlds must always originate with the seers. But such knowledge of these worlds as is necessary to the life of the soul may be obtained through the understanding. And it is perfectly possible to be unable to look into supersensible worlds oneself and yet be able to understand them and their peculiarities, with an understanding for which the soul has under certain circumstances a perfect right to ask, and indeed must ask.

Therefore it is also possible that we should choose our means of meditation out of the store of conceptions which we have acquired concerning the spiritual worlds. Such a means of meditation is by far the best and the one which leads us most safely to the goal.

Although such a notion may seem very natural, it is, however, not correct to believe that knowledge of higher worlds obtained through the understanding before attaining to supersensible vision is an obstacle to the development of such vision. The contrary is in fact more correct, namely, that it is easier and safer to arrive at clairvoy-

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ance with some preliminary understanding than without. Whether we stop short at understanding only, or go on to strive after clairvoyance, depends upon the awakening or non-awakening of an inner craving for firsthand knowledge. If such a craving is there, we cannot but look for every opportunity to start on a real personal pilgrimage into supersensible worlds.

The wish for an understanding of the higher worlds will spread more and more amongst the people of our day; for close observation of human evolution shows that from now onward human souls are entering upon a stage of development in which they will be unable to find the right relation to life without an understanding of supersensible worlds.

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When we have come so far on our soul's pilgrimage that we carry within ourselves as a memory all that we call "ourself," namely, our own being in physical life, and experience ourselves instead in another, newly-won superior ego, then we become capable of seeing our life stretching beyond the limits of earthly life. Before our spiritual sight appears the fact that we have shared in another life, in the spiritual world, prior to our present existence in the world of the senses; and in that spiritual life are to be found the real causes of the shaping of our physical existence. We become acquainted with the fact that before we received a physical body and entered upon this physical existence we lived a purely spiritual life. We see that that human being which we now are, with its faculties and inclinations, was prepared during a life that we spent in a purely spiritual world before birth. We look upon ourselves as upon beings who lived spiritually before their entrance into the world of the senses, and who are now striving to live as physical beings with those faculties and psychic characteristics which were originally attached to them and which have developed since their birth.

It would be a mistake to say: "How is it possible that in spiritual life I should have aspired to possess faculties and inclinations, which now, when I have got them, do not please me at all?" It does not matter whether something pleases the soul in the world of senses or not. That is not the point. The soul has quite different points of view for its aspirations in the spiritual world from those which it adopts in the life of the senses. The character of knowledge and will is quite different in the two worlds. In the spiritual life we know that for the sake of our total evolution we need a certain kind of life in the physical world, which when we get there may seem unsympathetic or depressing to the soul; and yet we strive for it, because in the spiritual existence we do not prefer what is sympathetic and agreeable, but what is necessary to the right development of our individual being.

It is the same with regard to the events of life. We contemplate them and see how we have prepared in the spiritual world what is antipathetic as well as what is sympathetic, and how we ourselves have brought together the impulses which cause our painful as well as our joyful experiences in physical existence. But even then we may find it incomprehensible that we ourselves have brought about this or that situation in life, as long as we only experience ourselves in the physical world. In the spiritual world, how-

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ever, we have had what may be called supersensible insight which caused us to say: "You must go through that uncongenial or painful experience, for only such an experience can bring you a step further in your total development."

From the standpoint of the physical world only, it is never possible to decide how far one particular life on earth brings a human being forward in his total evolution. Having realised the spiritual existence that precedes our earthly existence, we see the reasons why in our spiritual life we have aimed at a certain kind of destiny for the ensuing terrestrial life.

These reasons lead back to an earlier terrestrial life lived in the past. Upon the character of that earlier life, upon the experiences made and the capacities attained in it, depends the wish during the succeeding spiritual existence to correct defective experiences and develop neglected capacities through a new life upon earth. In the spiritual world you feel a wrong done by you to another human being to be a disturbance of the harmony of the world, and you realise the necessity of meeting that human being again on earth in the next terrestrial life, in order to be able to get into such relationship to him as to be able to repair the wrong you have done. During the progressive development of the soul the range of vision is widened over a whole series of earlier terrestrial lives. In this way you arrive through observation at a knowledge of the true history of the life of your higher "Ego." You see that man goes through his total existence in a succession of lives upon earth, and that between these repeated terrestrial lives he passes through purely spiritual states of existence which are connected with his terrestrial lives according to certain laws.

Thus the knowledge of repeated existences upon earth is lifted into the sphere of observation. (In order to avoid a frequently repeated mistake, attention is called to the following fact, more fully treated in other writings of mine. The sum total of a man's existence does not unfold itself in an endless repetition of lives. A certain number of repetitions take place, but both before the beginning and after the close of these quite different kinds of existence are found, and all this shows itself in its totality as a development inspired by sublime wisdom.)

The knowledge of repeated terrestrial lives may also be reached by reasonable observation of physical existence. In my books *Theosophy* and *An Outline of Occult Science*, as well as in lesser writings of mine, the attempt has been made to prove reincarnation along such lines of reasoning as are characteristic of the modern doctrine of evolution in natural science. It is there shown how logical thought and investigation that really follow up scientific research (and its results) to its full consequences are absolutely bound to accept the idea of evolution, presented to us by modern science, in such a sense as to consider the true being, the psychic individuality of man, as something which is evolving through a sequence of physical existences alternating with intermediate purely spiritual lives. The proofs attempted in those writings are naturally capable of much further development and completion. But the opinion does not seem unjustified that proofs in this matter have precisely the same scientific value as that which in general is called scientific proof. There is nothing in the science of spiritual things which cannot be confirmed by proofs of that kind. But of course we must admit the difficulty is greater

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for spiritually scientific proofs to be acknowledged than proofs of natural science.

This is not on account of their less stringent logic, but because in the face of such proofs one does not feel those underlying physical facts, which make the acceptance of the proofs of natural science so easy. This has nothing whatever to do with the conclusiveness of the reasoning itself.

And if we are capable of comparing with an unbiased mind the proofs of natural science with those given on analogous lines by spiritual science, we shall easily be convinced of their equally conclusive power. Thus the force of such proofs may also be added to that which the investigator of the spiritual worlds has to give as a description of successive terrestrial lives resulting from his own vision. The one side can support the other in the formation of a conviction of the truth of human reincarnation based simply on reasonable comprehension. Here the attempt has been made to show the way that leads beyond mental comprehension to supersensible vision of this reincarnation.

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THE THRESHOLD OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

APHORISTIC REMARKS

This small book contains 16 short sections, each section treating one or another aspect of Spiritual Science. The last section discusses the relation between this book and two others which deal with similar topics, namely Theosophy and Occult Science — an Outline.

In addition, clear and succinct summary chapters are interspersed in between the longer and more detailed sections, making this a very easily accessible book.

Introductory Remarks

IN this book there are given in an aphoristic form some descriptions of those parts of the universe and of the human being which come into view when spiritual knowledge crosses the boundary between the physical and spiritual worlds. It has not been sought to give either a systematic or in any way a complete account, but merely a few descriptions of spiritual experiences without any fixed plan. In this respect the present work, like my book, *A Road to Self-Knowledge* (published with this), is intended to complete and amplify my other writings. Yet it has also been sought to give the description in such a way that it may be read independently, without any knowledge of these other works.

One who really means to work his way to a knowledge of spiritual science will feel the necessity of continually contemplating the spiritual side of life from continually fresh points of view. It is indeed only natural that a certain one-sidedness should be connected with every presentation of this kind. This must be the case much more with descriptions of the spiritual sphere than with those of the physical world. And if we rest satisfied with merely one account, we cannot be said to be pursuing spiritual knowledge seriously. My desire, by such writings as this, is to be of use to those who are really in earnest in seeking knowledge of the spiritual world. On this account I try to present spiritual facts again and again from fresh points of view in spite of my having described them from other points of view in other works. Such accounts are complementary of each other, like photographs of a person or an event taken from various points.

In every such description, made from a certain standpoint, there is an opportunity for communicating knowledge which is not attainable from the other points of view. There are again in this book formulae for meditation for those who are seeking spiritual sight for themselves.

Those who are looking for such formulae wherewith to develop the life of their soul will easily find them here.

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I. Concerning the Reliance which may be placed on Thinking; the Nature of the Thinking Soul; and of Meditation

IN waking consciousness human thought is like an island in the midst of the stream of the soul's life, which flows by in impressions, sensations, feelings, and so forth. We have to a certain degree finished with an impression or a sensation when we have formed an idea concerning it, that is, when we have framed a thought which throws light on the impression or sensation. Even in a storm of passion and emotion, a certain degree of calm may set in, if the ship of the soul has worked its way to the island of thought.

The soul has a natural confidence in thinking. It feels that if it could not have this confidence, all stability in life would be lost. The healthy life of the soul comes to an end when it begins to doubt about thinking. For even if we cannot arrive at a clear understanding of something through thought, we may yet have the consolation that clearness would result if we could only rouse ourselves to think with sufficient force and acuteness. We can reassure ourselves with regard to our own incapacity to clear up a point by thinking; but the thought is intolerable that thinking itself would not be able to bring satisfaction, even if we were to penetrate as far into its domain as was necessary for gaining full light on some definite situation in life.

This attitude of the soul with regard to thinking underlies all human efforts after knowledge. It may be dulled in certain moods of the soul, but it is always to be found in the soul's dim feelings.

The thinker who doubts the validity and power of thought itself is deceived about the fundamental state of his soul. For it is often really his acuteness of thought which, being overstrained, constructs doubts and perplexities. If he did not really rely on thinking, he would not be tormented with these doubts, which after all are only the result of thinking.

One who develops in himself the feeling here indicated with regard to thought, feels that the latter is not merely something which he is cultivating in himself as a human force of the soul, but also something which quite independently of him and his soul bears within itself some Being of a cosmic nature, a Being to whom he must work his way, if he intends to live in something which belongs at the same time to him and to the world that is independent of him.

There is something deeply tranquillising in being able to surrender oneself to the

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life of thought. The soul feels that in that life it can escape from itself. This feeling is as necessary to the soul as the opposite one of being able to be wholly within itself.

In the necessary change between these two conditions lies the healthy rhythm of the soul's life. Waking and sleeping are really only the extremes of these conditions. When awake the soul is in itself, living its own life; in sleep it loses itself in the universal life of the world, and is therefore to a certain extent freed from itself. The conditions in either direction correspond to the various inner experiences. And the life of thought is a release of the soul from itself, just as feeling, sensation, emotional life, and so forth are the expression of the soul remaining within itself.

Looked at in this way, thought offers to the soul the consolation which it needs when face to face with the feeling of utter loneliness in the world. It is possible to arrive in quite a legitimate way at the feeling, "What am I in the current of universal cosmic events, flowing from one infinity to another — I with my feelings, desires, and will which surely can be of importance to me only?"

Directly the life of thought has been rightly realised, this feeling is confronted by another. "The thought which is concerned with these cosmic events draws into itself me and my soul; I am living in those events when I, through thinking, let their being flow into me." It is then possible to feel oneself taken into the universe and secure therein. From this condition of the soul, a strength ensues, which feels as though it had come from the cosmic powers themselves, in accordance with wise laws.

It is but another step from this feeling to that in which the soul says, "It is not only I who think, but something thinks in me; the cosmic life expresses itself in me; my soul is only the stage upon which the universe manifests itself as thought."

This feeling may be repudiated by this or that philosophy. It may, with various reasons, be made apparently quite obvious that the thought which has just been expressed, of the world thinking itself in the human soul, is entirely erroneous. In answer to this it must be realised that this thought is one which can be worked out through inner experience. Only one who has thus worked it out fully understands its validity, and knows that no refutations can shake that validity.

One who has thus mastered it sees from this very thought, quite clearly, what so many refutations and proofs are really worth. They may appear infallible when you still erroneously believe in the convincing power of their content. In that case it is difficult to come to an understanding with people who consider such proofs as conclusive. They are bound to think another person mistaken, because they have not yet accomplished the inner work within themselves which has brought him to a recognition of what seems to them erroneous, or perhaps even absurd.

For one who wishes to find his way into spiritual science, meditations such as the foregoing on thinking are of benefit. For such a person it is a question of bringing his soul into a condition which gives it access to the spiritual world. Access may be denied to the clearest thinking or to the most perfect scientific method, if the soul does not bring anything to meet the spiritual facts, or the information about them ready to press in upon

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it. It may be a good preparation for the apprehension of spiritual knowledge to have felt frequently what invigorating force there is in the attitude of soul which says, "I feel myself to be one in thought with the stream of cosmic events."

In this case it is less a question of the abstract value of this thought as knowledge, than of having often felt in our souls the powerful effect which is experienced when such a thought flows with force through the inner life and circulates like a breath of spiritual oxygen through the soul. It is not only a question of recognising what there is in a thought of this kind, but of experiencing it.

The thought is recognised when once it has been present in the soul with sufficient power of conviction; but if it is to ripen and bear fruit which shall promote understanding of the spiritual world, its beings and facts, it must, after having been understood, be made to live in the soul again and again. The soul must again and again be filled with the thought, allowing nothing else to be present in it, and shutting out all other thoughts, feelings, memories, and so forth. Repeated concentration of this kind on such a thoroughly grasped thought draws together forces in the soul which in ordinary life are to some extent dissipated. The soul concentrates and strengthens these forces within itself, and they become the organs for the perception of the spiritual world and its truths.

The right way in which to meditate may be learned from what has just been pointed out. We first work our way through to a thought which may be realised with the means that lie ready to hand in ordinary life and knowledge. Then we plunge into that thought again and again, and make ourselves completely one with it. The strengthening of the soul is the result of living with a thought which has thus been recognised. In this case the above thought was chosen as an example which was derived from the very nature of thinking. It was chosen as an example because it is very specially fruitful for meditation. But what has been said here holds good, with regard to meditation, for every thought which is acquired in the way that has been described. It is especially fruitful for meditation when we know the state of soul which results from the above-mentioned rhythmic swing in the life of the soul. By that means we arrive in the surest way at the feeling of having been in direct touch with the spiritual world during our meditation.

And this feeling is a sound result of meditation. The force of it should give strength to the rest of our daily life, and not in such a way that an ever-present impression of the meditative state is present the whole time, but so that one feels that from the meditative experience strength is flowing into our whole life.

If the state brought about by meditation extends through daily life as an ever-present impression, it diffuses something which disturbs the mental ease of that life. And the state of meditation itself will not then be sufficiently pure and strong. Meditation gives the best results when through its own character it is kept apart from ordinary life. It influences life in the best way when it is felt to be something distinct from and raised above ordinary life.

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II. Concerning Knowledge of the Spiritual World

COMPREHENSION of the facts stated by spiritual science is made easier, if in the ordinary life of the soul attention be given to that which gives rise to ideas capable of such enlargement and transformation that they gradually reach as far as the events and beings of the spiritual world. And unless this path be followed with patience we shall easily be tempted to picture the spiritual world too much like the physical world of the senses. Indeed, unless we follow this path we shall not be able to form a just conception of what is actually spiritual, and of its relation to man.

Spiritual events and beings crowd in upon man when he has prepared his soul to perceive them. The way in which they announce themselves is absolutely different from the way in which physical beings and facts do so. But an idea of this entirely different way of manifesting may be gained if the process of remembering be called to mind. Let us suppose we had an experience some time ago. At a definite moment — from one cause or another — this experience emerges from the depths of psychic life. We know that what so emerges corresponds to an experience, and we relate it to that experience. But at the moment of remembrance there is nothing of the experience present but only its image in the memory. Now let us imagine an image rising up in the soul in the same way as does a picture of memory yet expressing, not something previously experienced but something unfamiliar to the soul. If we do this, we have formed an idea of the way in which the spiritual world first makes its appearance in the soul, when the latter is sufficiently prepared for it.

Because this is so, one who is not sufficiently conversant with the conditions of the spiritual world will be perpetually bringing forward the objection that all “presumed” spiritual experiences are nothing else than more or less indistinct images of the memory, and that the soul merely does not recognise them as such and therefore takes them to be manifestations of a spiritual world. Now it should on no account be denied that it is difficult to distinguish between illusions and realities in this sphere. Many people who believe they have manifestations from a spiritual world are certainly only occupied with their own memories, which they do not recognise as such. In order to see quite clearly in this respect, it is necessary to be informed of those numerous sources from which illusion may arise. We may have seen, for instance, something only once and for a moment, seen it so hastily that the impression did not penetrate completely into the consciousness; and later — perhaps in a quite different form — it may appear as a vivid picture.

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We possibly feel convinced that we never had anything to do with the matter before, and that we have had a genuine inspiration.

This and many other things make it quite comprehensible that the statements made by those who have supersensible sight appear extremely questionable to those unacquainted with the special nature of spiritual science. But one who pays careful heed to all that is said in my books, *The Way of Initiation and Initiation and its Results*, about the development of spiritual sight, will be put in the way of being able to distinguish between illusion and truth in this sphere.

In this connection, however, the following should also be noted. It is true that spiritual experiences appear in the first place as pictures. It is thus that they rise out of the depths of the soul that is prepared for them. It is then a question of gaining the right relation to these pictures. They only have value for supersensible perception when, by the way in which they present themselves, they show that they are not to be taken for the facts themselves. Directly they are so taken, they are worth little more than ordinary dreams. They must present themselves to us like the letters of an alphabet. We do not look at the shape of the letters, but read in them what it is desired to express by their means. Just as something written does not call upon us to describe the form of the letters, so the images forming the content of supersensible sight do not call upon us to apprehend them as anything but images; but by their own character they force us to look right through their pictured form and direct our soul's gaze to that which, as a supersensible event or being, is endeavouring to express itself through them.

As little as a person on hearing that a letter contains news previously unknown can deny the possibility of this fact on account of the well-known character of the letters of the alphabet of which it is composed, so little can anybody object to clairvoyant pictures being formed out of well-known objects taken from ordinary life.

It is certainly true, up to a certain point, that the pictures are borrowed from ordinary life, but what is so borrowed is not the important thing to genuine clairvoyant consciousness. The important point is what lies behind and expresses itself through the pictures.

The soul must, of course, first prepare itself for seeing such images appear within its spiritual horizon; but, besides this, it must carefully cultivate the feeling of not stopping short at merely seeing them, but of relating them in the right way to the facts of the supersensible world. It may be said positively that for true clairvoyance there is required not only the capacity for beholding a world of images in oneself, but another faculty as well, which may be compared with reading in the physical world.

The supersensible world is at first to be looked upon as something lying wholly outside man's ordinary consciousness, which has no means of penetrating into that world. The powers of the soul, strengthened by meditation, first bring it into contact with the supersensible world. By means of these the pictures that have been described emerge from the wave of the soul's life. As pictures these are woven entirely by the soul itself. And the materials of which they are made are actually the forces which the soul has acquired for itself in the physical world. The fabric of the pictures is really nothing else but

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what may be characterised as memory. The clearer we make this to ourselves, in order to understand clairvoyant consciousness, the better. We shall in that case clearly understand that they are but images. And we shall also be cultivating a right understanding of the way in which the images are to be related to the supersensible world.

Through the pictures we shall learn to read in the supersensible world. The impressions of the physical world naturally bring us much nearer to the beings and events of that world than the images seen supersensibly bring us to the supersensible world. We might even say that these images are at first like a curtain put up by the soul between it and the supersensible world, when it feels itself to be in contact with that world.

It is a question of becoming gradually familiar with the way in which supersensible things are experienced. Through experience we learn by degrees to read the images, that is, to interpret them correctly. In more important supersensible experiences, their very nature shows that we cannot here have to do with mere pictures of memory from ordinary life. It is indeed true that in this connection many absurd things are asserted by people who have been convinced of certain supersensible facts, or at any rate think they have been. Many people, for instance, when convinced of the truth of reincarnation, at once connect the pictures which arise in their soul with experiences of a former earth-life; but one should always be suspicious when these pictures seem to point to previous earth-lives which are similar in one respect or another to the present one, or which make their appearance in such a way that the present life can, by reasoning, be plausibly explained from the supposed earlier lives.

When, in the course of genuine supersensible experience, the true impression of a former earth-life, or of several such lives, appears, it generally happens that the former life or lives are such that we could never have fashioned them or have desired to fashion them in thought by any amount of thinking back from the present life, or out of any wishes and efforts in connection with it. We may, for instance, receive an impression of our former earth existence at some moment during our present life when it is quite impossible to acquire certain faculties, which we had during that former life. So far from its being the case that images appear for the more important spiritual experiences which might be memories of ordinary life, the pictures for these are generally such as we should not have thought of at all in ordinary experience. This tendency increases with real impressions the more purely supersensible the worlds become from which they issue. Thus it is often quite impossible to form images from ordinary life explanatory of the existence between birth and the preceding death. We may find out that in the spiritual life we have developed affection for people and things in complete contrast with the corresponding inclinations we are developing in the present life on earth; and we learn that in our earth-life we have often been driven to be fond of something which in the previous spiritual existence (between death and rebirth) we have rejected and avoided. Any memory of this existence which might be imagined to result from ordinary physical experiences must therefore necessarily be different from the impression we receive through real perception in the spiritual world.

One who is not familiar with spiritual science will certainly make further objections against things being in reality as they have just been described. He will be able to

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say, for instance: "You are indeed fond of something, but human nature is complicated, and secret antipathy is mixed up with every affection. This antipathy to the thing referred to comes up in you at a particular moment. You think it is a prenatal experience, whereas it may perhaps be quite naturally explained from the subconscious psychic facts of the case." In general there is nothing to be said against such an objection; and in many cases it may be quite correct. Knowledge of clairvoyant consciousness is not easily gained, nor is it without the possibility of objections. But just as it is true that a supposed clairvoyant may be mistaken and regard a subconscious fact as an experience of prenatal spirit-life, so it is also true that a training in spiritual science leads to a knowledge of self which embraces subconscious states of soul and is able to free itself from any illusions with regard to them. Here it need only be asserted that that supersensible knowledge alone is true which at the moment of cognition is able to distinguish what originates from supersensible worlds from that which has merely been shaped by individual imagination. This faculty of discernment becomes so developed by familiarity with supersensible worlds, that perception may in this sphere be as certainly distinguished from imagination, as in the physical world hot iron which is touched with the finger may be distinguished from imaginary hot iron.

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III. Concerning Man's Etheric Body and the Elemental World

MAN arrives at the recognition and knowledge of a supersensible spiritual world by overcoming certain obstacles in the way of such a recognition, which at the outset are present in his soul. The difficulty in this case is due to the fact that these obstacles, though affecting the course of the soul's inner experience, are not apprehended as such by ordinary consciousness. For there are many things present, and living, in the human soul, of which at first it knows nothing, and of which it has to gain knowledge by degrees, just as it does of beings and events belonging to the outer world.

The spiritual world, before it is perceived and recognised by the soul, is to the latter something quite strange and unfamiliar, the qualities of which have nothing in common with what the soul is able to learn through its experiences in the physical world. Thus it comes about that the soul may be confronted with the spiritual world and may see in it an absolute void. The soul may feel as though it were looking into an infinite, blank, desolate abyss. Now this feeling actually exists in those depths of the soul of which it is at first unconscious. The feeling is something like fear and dread, and the soul lives in it without being aware of the fact. For the life of the soul is determined not only by what it knows, but by that which is actually present within it, without its knowledge. Now when the soul searches, in the sphere of thought, for reasons for disproving and for evidence against the spiritual world, it does so, not because those reasons are conclusive in themselves, but because it is seeking for a kind of narcotic to dull the feeling just described.

People do not deny the existence of the spiritual world, or the possibility of attaining knowledge of it, as a result of being able to prove its non-existence, but because they desire to fill their souls with thoughts which will deceive them and rid them of their dread of the spiritual world.

Liberation from this longing for a materialistic narcotic for deadening the dread of the spiritual world cannot be gained till a survey is made of the whole circumstances of this part of the soul's life, as here described. "Materialism as a psychic phenomenon of fear" is an important chapter in the science of the soul.

This dread of the spiritual becomes intelligible when we have won our way through to a recognition of the spiritual; when we have come to see that the events and beings of the physical world are the outward expression of supersensible, spiritual events and beings. We arrive at this understanding when we can see that the body belonging to

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man, which is perceptible to the senses and with which alone ordinary science is concerned, is the expression of a subtle, supersensible, or etheric body, in which the material or physical body is enclosed, like a denser nucleus, as though in a cloud.

This etheric body is the second principle of human nature. It forms the basis of the life of the physical body. But as regards his etheric body man is not cut off from its corresponding outer world to the same extent to which his physical body is detached from the physical outer world. When we speak of an outer world in connection with the etheric body, it is not the physical outer world, perceived by the senses, that is meant, but a spiritual environment which is as supersensible in relation to the physical world as man's etheric body is in relation to his physical body. Man, as an etheric being, stands in an etheric, or elemental world.

Man is always "experiencing" the fact, although in ordinary life he knows nothing of it, that he, as an etheric being, inhabits an elemental world. When he becomes conscious of this state of things, the consciousness is quite different from that of ordinary experience. This new consciousness sets in when man becomes clairvoyant. The clairvoyant then knows about that which is always present in life, though hidden from ordinary consciousness.

Now in his ordinary consciousness man calls himself "I," signifying the being which presents itself in his physical body. The healthy life of his soul in the world of the senses depends on his thus recognising himself as a being separated from the rest of the world. That healthy psychic life would be interrupted if he characterised any other events or beings of the outer world as part of his ego. When man realises himself as an etheric being in the elemental world, things are different. Then his own ego-being blends with certain occurrences and beings around him. The etheric human being has to find himself in that which is not his inner being, in the same sense as "inner" is conceived in the physical world.

In the elemental world there are forces, occurrences, and beings which, although in certain respects part of the outer world, must yet be considered as belonging to one's own ego. As etheric human beings we are woven into the elemental essence of the world. In the physical world we have our thoughts, with which we are so bound up that we may look upon them as forming a constituent part of our ego. But there are forces, occurrences, and so forth which act as intimately upon the inner nature of the etheric human being as thoughts do in the physical world; and which do not behave like thoughts, but are like beings living with and in the soul. Therefore clairvoyance needs a stronger inner force than that which the soul possesses for the purpose of maintaining its own independence in the face of its thoughts. And the essential preparation for true clairvoyance consists in so strengthening and invigorating the soul inwardly, that it can be conscious of itself as an individual being, not only in the presence of its own thoughts, but also when the forces and beings of the elemental world enter the field of its consciousness as if they were a part of its own being.

Now that force of the soul by means of which it maintains its position as a being in the elemental world, is present in man's ordinary life. The soul at first knows nothing of

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this force, although possessing it. In order to possess it consciously, the soul must first prepare itself. It must acquire that inner force of the soul which is gained during the preparation for clairvoyance. As long as a man cannot make up his mind to acquire this inner force, he has a quite comprehensible dread of recognising his spiritual environment, and he — unconsciously — has recourse to the illusion that the spiritual world does not exist or cannot be known. This illusion delivers him from his instinctive dread of the growing together or blending of his own individual essence, or ego-being, with an actual outer spiritual world.

One who sees into the facts which have been described, comes to recognise an etheric human being behind the physical human being, and a supersensible, etheric, or elemental world behind the one that is physically perceptible.

Clairvoyant consciousness finds in the elemental world real beings which up to a certain point have independence, just as physical consciousness finds thoughts in the physical world which are unreal and have no independence. Growing familiarity with the elemental world leads to seeing these partially independent beings in closer connection with each other. Just as someone may first look upon the limbs of a physical human body as partially independent, and afterwards acknowledge them to be parts of the body as a whole, so to clairvoyant consciousness are the several beings of the elemental world embraced within one great spiritual body, of which they are living members. In the further course of clairvoyant experience that body comes to be recognised as the elemental, supersensible, etheric body of the earth. Within the earth's etheric body an etheric human being feels himself to be a member of a whole.

This progress in clairvoyance is a process of growing familiar with the nature of the elemental world. That world is inhabited by beings of the most widely different kinds. If we desire to express the activity of these force-beings, we can only do it by portraying their various peculiarities in pictures. Amongst them are beings which are found to be allied with everything which makes for endurance, solidity, and weight. They may be designated as earth-souls. (And if we do not think ourselves otherwise, and are not afraid of an image which only points to reality and is not reality itself, we may speak of them as Gnomes.) We also find beings which are so constituted that they may be designated as air, water, and fire souls.

Then again other beings appear. It is true that they so manifest themselves that they seem to be elemental or etheric beings, yet it may be seen that there is something in their etheric nature which is of higher quality than the essence of the elemental world. We learn to understand that it is as impossible to apprehend the real nature of these beings with the degree of clairvoyance sufficient only for the elemental world, as it is to arrive at the true nature of man with merely physical consciousness.

The beings mentioned above, which may figuratively be called earth, water, air, and fire souls, are, with the activity proper to them, situated in a certain respect within the earth's elemental etheric body. Their tasks lie there. But the beings of a higher nature which have been characterised carry their activity beyond the earth-sphere. If we come to know them better, through clairvoyant experience, we ourselves and our con-

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sciousness are carried in the spirit beyond the sphere of earth. We see how this earth-sphere has been developed from another, and how it is evolving within itself spiritual germs so that in time to come a further sphere, in a sense of a new earth, may arise out of it. My book Occult Science explains why that from which the earth was formed may be designated as an “old Moon-planet,” and why the world towards which the earth aspires in the future may be called Jupiter. The essential point is that by the “old Moon,” we understand a world long gone by, from which the earth has formed itself by transformation; whilst we understand Jupiter, in a spiritual sense, to be a future world, towards which the earth is aspiring.

IV. Summary of the Foregoing

UNDERLYING man's physical being is a subtle, etheric human being which lives in an elemental environment, as physical man lives in a physical environment. The elemental outer world is incorporated in the supersensible etheric body of the earth. This latter proves to be the transmuted essence of an earlier or Moon-world, and the preparatory stage of a future world (Jupiter). One may give the foregoing schematically as follows. Man contains: —

I. The physical body, in the surrounding physical, material world. Through this body, man comes to recognise himself as an independent, individual being, or ego.

II. The subtle, etheric body in the surrounding elemental world. By its means man comes to recognise himself as a member of the earth's etheric body, and hence indirectly as a member of it in three consecutive planetary conditions.

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V. Concerning Reincarnation and Karma; Man's Astral Body and the Spiritual World; and Ahrimanic Beings

IT is especially difficult for the soul to recognise that there is something prevailing within its life which is environment to the soul in the same way as the so-called outer world is environment to the ordinary senses. The soul unconsciously resists this, because it imagines its independent existence imperilled by such a fact; and therefore instinctively turns away from it. For though more modern science theoretically admits the existence of the fact, this does not mean that it is as yet fully realised, with all the consequences of inwardly grasping it and becoming permeated with it. If, however, our consciousness can attain to realising it as a vital fact, we learn to discern in the soul's nature an inner nucleus, which exists independently of everything that may be developed in the sphere of the soul's conscious life between birth and death. We learn to know in our own depths a being of which we feel our own self to be the creation, and by which we also feel that our body, the vehicle of consciousness, has been created, with all its powers and attributes.

In the course of this experience the soul learns to feel that a spiritual entity within it is growing to maturity, and that this entity withdraws itself from the influence of conscious life. It begins to feel that this inner entity becomes more and more vigorous, and also more independent, in the course of the life between birth and death. It learns to realise that the entity bears the same relation to the rest of experience, between birth and death, as the developing germ in the being of a plant bears to the sum-total of the plant in which it is developing: with the difference that the germ of the plant is of a physical, whilst the germ of the soul is of a spiritual nature.

The course of such an experience leads one to admit the idea of repeated earthly lives. In the nucleus of the soul, which is to a certain degree independent of the soul, the latter is able to feel the germ of a new human life. Into that life the germ will carry over the results of the present one, when it has experienced in a spiritual world after death, in a purely spiritual way, those conditions of life in which it cannot share as long as it is enveloped in a physical earthly body between birth and death.

From this thought there necessarily results another, namely, that the present physical life between birth and death is the product of other lives long past, in which the soul developed a germ which continued to live on in a purely spiritual world after death, till it was ripe for entering upon a new earthly life through a new birth; just as the germ of the

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plant becomes a new plant when, after having been detached from the old plant in which it was formed, it has been for a while in other conditions of life.

When the soul has been adequately prepared, clairvoyant consciousness learns to immerse itself in the process of the development in one human life of a germ, in a certain way independent, which carries over the results of that life into later earthly lives. In the form of a picture, yet essentially real, as though it were about to reveal itself as an individual entity, there emerges from the waves of the life of the soul a second self, which appears independent of and set over the being which we have previously looked upon as ourself. It seems like an inspirer of that self. And we as this latter self, then flow into one with our inspiring, superior self.

Now our ordinary consciousness lives in this state of things, which is thus beheld by clairvoyant consciousness, without being aware of the fact. Once again it is necessary for the soul to be strengthened, in order that one may hold one's own, not only as regards a spiritual outer world with which one blends, but even as regards a spiritual entity which in a higher sense is one's own self, and which nevertheless stands outside that which is necessarily felt to be the self in the physical world. The way in which the second self rises out of the waves of the soul's life, in the form of a picture, yet essentially real, is quite different in different human individualities. I have tried in the following plays picturing the soul's life, "The Portal of Initiation," "The Soul's Probation," "The Guardian of the Threshold," and "The Awakening of the Soul," to portray how various human individualities work their way through to the experience of this "other self."

Now even if the soul in ordinary consciousness knows nothing about its being inspired by its other self, yet that inspiration is nevertheless there, in the depths of the soul. It is, however, not expressed in thoughts or inner words; but takes effect through deeds, through events or through something that happens. It is the other self that guides the soul to the details of its life's destiny, and calls forth capacities, inclinations, aptitudes, and so forth within it. This other self lives in the sum-total or aggregate of the destiny of a human life. It moves alongside of the self which is conditioned by birth and death, and shapes human life, with all that it contains of joy and sorrow.

When clairvoyant consciousness joins that other self, it learns to say "I" to the total aggregate of the life-destiny, just as physical man says "I" to his individual being. That which is called by an Eastern word Karma, grows together in the way that has been indicated, with the other self, or the spiritual ego. The life of a human being is seen to be inspired by his own permanent entity, which lives on from one life to another; and the inspiration operates in such a way that the life-destiny of one earthly existence is the direct consequence of previous ones.

Thus man learns to know himself as another being, different from his physical personality, which indeed only comes to expression in physical existence through the working of this being. When the consciousness enters the world of that other being, it is in a region which, as compared with the elemental world, may be called the world of the spirit.

As long as we feel ourselves to be in that world, we find ourselves completely

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outside the sphere in which all the experiences and events of the physical world are enacted. We look from another world back upon the one which we have in a certain sense left behind. But we also arrive at the knowledge that, as human beings, we belong to both worlds. We feel the physical world to be a kind of reflected image of the world of the spirit. Yet this image, although reflecting the events and beings of the spiritual world, does not merely do this, but also leads an independent life of its own, although it is only an image. It is as though a person were to look into a mirror, and as though his reflected image were to come to independent life whilst he was looking at it.

Moreover, we learn to know spiritual beings who bring about this independent life of the reflected image of the spiritual world. We feel them to be beings who belong to the world of the spirit with regard to their origin, but who have left the arena of that world, and sought their field of action in the physical world. We thus find ourselves confronting two worlds which act one upon the other. We will call the spiritual world the higher, and the physical world the lower.

We learn to know these spiritual beings in the lower world through having to a certain extent transferred our point of view to the higher world. One class of these spiritual beings presents itself in such a way that through them we discover the reason why man experiences the physical world as substantial and material. We discover that everything material is in reality spiritual, and that the spiritual activity of these beings consolidates and hardens the spiritual element of the physical world into matter. However unpopular certain names are in the present day, they are needed for that which is seen as reality in the world of spirit. And so we will call the beings who bring about materialisation the Ahrimanic beings. It appears that their original sphere is the mineral kingdom. In that kingdom they reign in such a way that there they can bring fully into manifestation what is their real nature. In the vegetable kingdom and in the higher kingdoms of nature they accomplish something else, which only becomes intelligible when the sphere of the elemental world is taken into account. Seen from the world of the spirit, the elemental world also appears like a reflection of that world. But the reflected image in the elemental world has not so much independence as that in the physical world. In the former, the spiritual beings of the Ahrimanic class are less dominant than in the latter. From the elemental world, however, they do develop, amongst other things, the kind of activity which comes to expression in annihilation and death. We may even say that in the higher kingdoms of nature the part of the Ahrimanic beings is to introduce death. So far as death is part of the necessary order of existence, the mission of the Ahrimanic beings is legitimate.

But when we view the activity of the Ahrimanic beings from the world of the spirit, we find that something else is connected with their work in the lower world. Inasmuch as their sphere of action is there, they do not feel bound to respect the limits which would restrain their activity if they were operating in the higher world from which they originate. In the lower world they struggle for an independence which they could never have in the higher sphere. This is especially evident in the influence of the Ahrimanic beings on man, inasmuch as man forms the highest kingdom of nature in the physical world. As

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far as the human life of the soul is bound up with physical existence, they strive to give that life independence, to wrench it free from the higher world, and to incorporate it entirely in the lower. Man as a thinking soul originates from the higher world. The thinking soul which has become clairvoyant also enters that higher world. But the thinking which is evolved in, and bound up with, the physical world, has in it that which must be called the influence of the Ahrimanic beings. These beings desire to give, as it were, a kind of permanent existence to a sense-bound thinking within the physical world. At the same time as their forces bring death, they desire to hold back the thinking soul from death, and only to allow the other principles of man to be carried away by the stream of annihilation. Their intention is that the human power of thought shall remain behind in the physical world and adopt a kind of existence approximating ever more and more to the Ahrimanic nature.

In the lower world what has just been described is only expressed through its effects. Man may strive to saturate himself in his thinking soul with the forces which recognise the spiritual world, and know themselves to live and have their being within it. But he may also turn away with his thinking soul from those forces, and only make use of his thought for laying hold of the physical world. Temptations to the latter course of action come from the Ahrimanic powers.

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VI. Concerning the Astral Body and the Luciferic Beings; and the Nature of the Etheric Body

THERE is another group of spiritual beings, who from the world of the spirit are seen to be active in the physical world (and also in the elemental world), as in an adopted field of action. These are the spirits who desire to liberate the feeling soul entirely from the physical world, and therefore in a certain way to spiritualise it. Life in the physical world is part of the cosmic order of things. While the human soul is living in the physical world, it is passing through a development which is part of the conditions of its existence. Its being woven into the physical world is a result of the activity of beings whom one learns to know in the higher world. That activity is opposed by the beings who desire to wrench the feeling soul free from physical conditions. These latter beings may be called the Luciferic beings.

The Luciferic beings stand in the physical world searching as it were, for everything of a psychic nature (feeling) which is to be found there, in order that they may draw it out of the physical world and incorporate it in a cosmic sphere of their own, adapted to their nature. Seen from the higher world, the activity of these Luciferic beings is also observable in the elemental world.

Within this they strive to obtain a certain sphere of power which they want to disconnect from the grossness of the physical world, although that sphere has been preordained, by the beings of the higher world, to be connected with the lower world. Just as the Ahrimanic beings would be keeping to their own sphere if they were only to bring about the temporary annihilation of existence which is based on the order of the cosmos, so the Luciferic beings would not be crossing the boundary of their own kingdom if they imbued the feeling soul with powers which would continually stimulate it to rise above the urgent necessities of the physical world, and feel itself, with regard to those necessities, a free and independent being. But the Luciferic beings go beyond the limits of their domain when they desire, in the face of the universal order of the higher world, to create a special spiritual kingdom for which they wish to remould the psychic beings in the physical world.

We can see how the influence of Luciferic beings in the physical world expands in two directions. On the one hand it is owing to them that man is able to rise above the bare experience of what is physically real. He is able to derive his joy, his uplifting, not only from the physical world; but can also take pleasure in and feel elated by that which ex-

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ists merely in semblance, that which, as beauty transcends the physical. From this point of view the Luciferic beings have cooperated in bringing about the most important, and especially the artistic, features of civilisation. Moreover, man is able to enjoy unfettered thought; he need not merely describe physical things and portray them slavishly in his thoughts. He is able to develop creative thought beyond the physical world, and to philosophise about things. On the other hand, the exaggeration of the Luciferic forces in the soul is the source of much extravagance and confusion, for they try to develop the activities of the soul without adhering to the conditions of the higher cosmic order.

Philosophising which is not based upon a thorough adherence to the cosmic order, headstrong indulgence in arbitrary ideas, excessive forcing of one's own personal predilections: all these things are the dark side of the Luciferic activity.

The human soul belongs, through its other self, to the higher world. But it also belongs to existence in the lower world. Clairvoyant consciousness, if it has passed through adequate preparation, feels itself as a conscious being in the higher world. The facts of the case are not altered, but, to those facts which hold good for every human soul, there is added in clairvoyant consciousness, the knowledge of the facts. Every human soul belongs to the higher world, and when man is living in the physical world, he is associated with a physical body which is subject to the processes of the physical world. The soul is also associated with a subtle, etheric body, which lives subject to the processes of the elemental world. The Ahrimanic and Luciferic forces which are spiritual and supersensible work in both these bodies.

In so far as the human soul lives in the higher or spiritual world, it is what may be called an astral being. One of the many reasons which justify this expression is that the astral being of man as such is not subject to the conditions which prevail within the sphere of earth. Spiritual science recognises that within man's astral being are working, not the "natural" laws of earth, but those laws which have to be taken into account in considering the processes of the world of the stars (astra). On this account the term may appear justified. Thus the recognition of a third or astral body is added to that of the physical body and the subtle, etheric body of man. But it is necessary that the following should be borne in mind. As regards its original essence, man's astral body has its origin in the higher world, in the spiritual world proper.

Within that sphere it is a being of the same nature as other beings whose activity is exercised in that world. Inasmuch then as the elemental and physical worlds are reflections of the spiritual world, the etheric and physical bodies of man must also be looked upon as reflections of his astral being. But in those bodies forces are working, which originate from the Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings. Now since those beings have a spiritual origin, it is natural that within the region of the etheric and physical bodies themselves there should be found a kind of human astral essence. And a degree of clairvoyance which merely accepts the pictures of clairvoyant consciousness, without being able rightly to understand their meaning, may easily take the astral admixture in the physical and etheric bodies for the astral body proper. Yet that human astral essence is just that principle of human nature which opposes man's conforming to the laws really suitable for him in the order of the cosmos. Mistakes and confusions are more easily made in this

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domain because a knowledge of the soul's astral being is at the outset quite impossible for ordinary human consciousness.

Even during the first stages of clairvoyant consciousness such knowledge is not yet attainable. The consciousness is attained when man experiences himself in his etheric body. But in this body he beholds the reflected images of his other self, and the higher world to which he belongs. In this way also he beholds the reflected etheric image of his astral body, and at the same time the Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings which that body contains.

It will be shewn later in this work that the ego too, which man in ordinary life looks upon as his entity, is not the real ego, but only the reflection of the real ego in the physical world. In the same way the etheric reflection of the astral body may, in etheric clairvoyance, become an illusory image mistaken for the real astral body.

When one penetrates further into the higher world, clairvoyant consciousness also succeeds in gaining a true insight as regards human beings into the nature of the reflection of the higher world in the lower. It then becomes supremely evident that the subtle, etheric body, which man bears about him in his present earthly existence, is not really the reflected image of that which corresponds to this body in the higher world. It is a reflected image altered by the activity of the Luciferic beings of Wisdom. Later, during the Moon and Ahrimanic beings. The spiritual archetype and Earth conditions, the etheric body has of the etheric body is not able to reflect itself become changed into that which it now is at all perfectly in man on earth, owing to as a part of the human being. the nature of the earthly essence in which the beings mentioned above are active. If clairvoyant consciousness betakes itself beyond the earth to a region in which a perfect reflection of the archetype of the etheric body is possible, it finds itself carried back to a remote past, previous to the present condition of the earth, before even the "Moon condition" which preceded it. It arrives at an insight into the manner in which the present earth was evolved out of a "Moon condition," and the latter again out of a "Sun condition." Further particulars as to why the terms "Sun." and "Moon" condition are justified will be found in my Occult Science.

The earth, then, was once in a Sun condition, out of which it evolved to a Moon condition, and afterwards became earth. During the Sun condition the etheric body of man was an absolute reflection of the spiritual events and beings of the world from which it originates. Clairvoyant consciousness discovers that those Sun beings were made up of pure wisdom. Thus we may say that, during the earth's Sun condition in a remote past, man received his etheric body as a pure reflection of cosmic beings of Wisdom. Later, during the Moon and Earth conditions, the etheric body has become changed into that which it now is as part of the human being.

VII. Summary of the Foregoing

MAN bears within him a soul-centre belonging to a spiritual world. This is the permanent humanentity, which passes through repeated earthly lives in such a way that in one earthly life it is trained in normal consciousness as a being independent of that consciousness, then experiences itself in a purely spiritual world, after human physical

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death, and in due time realises in a newearthly life the results of the preceding one. This permanent entity acts as the inspirer of man's destiny in such a way that one earthly life follows another as a consequence which is based on the order of the cosmos.

Man is this permanent entity itself; he lives in it as though in his other self. Inasmuch as he, as a being, is that other self, so he lives in an astral body, in the same way as he is living in a physical and etheric body. Just as the environment of the physical body is the physical world and that of the etheric body the elemental world, so the environment of the astral body is the world of the spirit. Beings of the same nature and origin as man's other self are working in the physical and elemental worlds as Ahrimanic and Luciferic powers. The way in which they work makes the relation of the astral body to the etheric and physical bodies intelligible.

The original source of the etheric body is to be found in a long-past period of the earth, its so-called Sun condition.

In accordance with the foregoing, the following survey of man may be made: —

I. The physical body in the environment of the physical world. By means of this body man recognises himself as an independent individual (ego).

II. The subtle (etheric or vital) body in the elemental environment. By means of this body man recognises himself as a member of the earth's vital body, and hence indirectly as a member of three successive planetary states.

III. The astral body in a purely spiritual environment. Through this body man is a member of a spiritual world of which the elemental and physical worlds are reflections. In the astral body lives man's other self, and this comes to expression in repeated earthly lives.

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VIII. Concerning the Guardian of the Threshold and some Peculiarities of Clairvoyant Consciousness

AS far as his experiences in the physical world are concerned, man is outside the spiritual world, in which, as has been stated in the preceding pages, his real being is rooted. The part played by physical experience in human nature is realised when we consider that for clairvoyant consciousness, which enters the supersensitive worlds, it is necessary to strengthen those very forces of the soul which are acquired in the physical world. If this strengthening has not taken place, the soul feels a certain timidity in entering the supersensible world. It even tries to avoid an entrance by seeking proofs of its impossibility.

But if the soul finds that it is strong enough to enter, if it recognises in itself the forces which allow it, after entering, to maintain itself there as an independent being, and to experience in its field of consciousness not only thoughts but beings, as must be the case in the elemental and spiritual worlds, then the soul also feels that only by life in the physical world has it been enabled to gather those forces. It realises the necessity of being led through the physical world on its journey through the universe.

The realisation of this especially results from the experience in thoughts through which clairvoyant consciousness passes. On entering the elemental world, the consciousness becomes filled with beings who are perceived in the form of pictures. In that world it is not able to develop with regard to these beings an inner activity of the soul similar to that which is developed in thought-life within the physical world. Yet it would be impossible to find one's way as a human being within the elemental world if we did not enter it as thinking beings. We might certainly behold the beings of the elemental world without thinking about them, but we should not know what any of them really were. We should be like a man looking at writing which he cannot read; he sees with his eyes exactly the same thing as is seen by one who can read it, but it only has meaning and substance for the latter.

Nevertheless clairvoyant consciousness during its sojourn in the elemental world exercises by no means the same kind of thought-activity as is carried on in the physical world. Rather is it the case that a thinking being — such as man — in the act of beholding the elemental world also perceives the meaning of its beings and force; while a non-thinking being would see the pictures without understanding their meaning and essence.

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On entering the spiritual world, the Ahrimanic beings, for instance, would be taken for something quite different from what they really are if they were beheld by the soul of a non-thinking being. It is the same with the Luciferic and other beings of the spiritual world. The Ahrimanic and Luciferic beings are only beheld by man in their true reality if he contemplates them from the spiritual world with clairvoyant sight which has been strengthened by thinking.

If the soul did not arm itself with adequate power for thought, the Luciferic beings, when seen from the spiritual world, would take possession of the world of clairvoyant pictures and bring about in the contemplating soul the illusion that it was penetrating ever more deeply into the spiritual world which it was really seeking, whereas actually it would be sinking deeper and deeper into the world which the Luciferic forces desire to prepare similar to their own being. The soul would certainly feel itself becoming more independent, but it would be adapting itself to a spiritual world not in keeping with its own nature and origin. It would be entering a spiritual environment foreign to it.

The physical world conceals from view such beings as the Luciferic ones. Therefore, within that world they are not able to mislead the consciousness. They are simply non-existent as far as this consciousness is concerned, and, not being misled by them, it is able to strengthen itself adequately by thought. It is one of the instinctive peculiarities of healthy consciousness that it only desires to enter the spiritual world in proportion as it has sufficiently strengthened itself in the physical world for beholding the spiritual world. Consciousness clings to the way in which it experiences itself in the physical world. It feels itself to be in its own element when it can experience itself by means of the thoughts, feelings, emotions, etc., which it owes to the physical world. The tenacity with which consciousness clings to this kind of experience is especially apparent at the actual moment of entering supersensible worlds. Just as a person at particular moments of his life clings to dear memories, so at the entrance to supersensible worlds do there of necessity ascend from the depths of the soul all possible affections of which the individual is capable. We then become aware how strongly we cleave to that life which connects man with the physical world. This attachment to earth-life then appears in its full reality, stripped of our usual illusions. At the entrance to the supersensible world, and, as it were, at the first supersensible achievement — a certain self-knowledge is brought about, of which we can previously have had scarcely any idea. And we see how much we have to leave behind if we really desire to enter knowingly into that world in which, after all, we are always actually present. What we have made of ourselves as human beings, consciously and unconsciously in the physical world comes before the soul with the most vivid distinctness.

The result of this experience is often that all further attempts at penetrating into supersensible worlds are abandoned. For we then clearly realise the necessity of changing our way of thinking and feeling, if our sojourn in the spiritual world is to be successful. We have to make up our minds to develop quite a different attitude of soul from the one that has hitherto been ours, or, in other words, a different attitude must be added to the one we have already acquired.

And yet — what is it that really happens at the moment of entering the supersensible

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world? We see the being which we have always been; but we do not now see it from the physical world, from which we have always seen it hitherto; we see it, free from illusions, in its true reality, from the standpoint of the spiritual world. We behold it in such a way that we feel ourselves permeated with those powers of cognition which are able to measure it according to its spiritual worth.

When we see ourselves thus, it becomes plain why we hesitate about consciously entering the supersensible world; the degree of strength becomes apparent, which it is necessary to have before entering it. We see how, even with knowledge, we keep at a distance from that world. And the more accurately we thus see through ourselves, the more strongly do those affections come to the front by means of which we desire to continue to keep our consciousness in the physical world. Our increased knowledge entices those affections out of their lurking-places in the depths of the soul. We must, however, recognise them, for only by so doing are they overcome. But even when recognised they still manifest their power in quite a remarkable way. They desire to subdue the soul, which feels itself drawn down by them as if into unknown depths. The moment of self-recognition is a serious one. Far too much philosophising and theorising about self-knowledge goes on in the world. The soul's gaze is thereby rather turned away from, than drawn towards, the earnestness connected with real self-knowledge. And yet, in spite of this necessary earnestness, it affords a great satisfaction to know that human nature is so ordered that its instincts prevent it from entering the spiritual world before it is able to develop within itself, as self-experience, the necessary state of maturity. What a satisfaction it is that the first momentous meeting with a being of the supersensible world is the meeting with our own being in its true reality which will guide us further in human evolution.

We may say that there is hidden within man a being that keeps careful watch and ward on the boundary which has to be crossed at the entrance to the supersensible world. This spiritual being, hidden in man, which is man himself, but which he can as little perceive with ordinary consciousness as the eye can see itself, is the guardian of the threshold of the spiritual world. We learn to recognise him at the moment at which we are not only actually he, but are also confronting him, as though we were standing outside him, and he were another being.

As with other experiences of supersensible worlds, it is the strengthened and reinforced faculties of the soul which make visible the guardian of the threshold. For, setting aside the fact that the meeting with the guardian becomes raised into knowledge by clairvoyant spiritual sight, that meeting is not an event which happens only to the man who has become clairvoyant. Exactly the same fact as is represented by this meeting happens to every human being every time he falls asleep, and we are confronting ourselves — which is the same thing as standing before the guardian of the threshold — for so long as our sleep lasts. During sleep the soul rises to its supersensible nature. But its inner forces are not then strong enough to bring about consciousness of itself.

In order to understand clairvoyant experience, especially in its early beginnings, it is particularly important to bear in mind that the soul may already have begun to live in the supersensible world before it is able to formulate to itself any knowledge worthy of

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the name. Clairvoyance at first appears in a very subtle way, so that often, inasmuch, as they expect to see something almost tangible, people do not heed clairvoyant impressions which are flitting by, and will in no way recognise them as such. In this case the impressions sink into oblivion almost as soon as they appear. They enter the field of consciousness so slightly that they remain quite unnoticed, like tiny clouds on the soul's horizon.

On this account, and because people for the most part expect clairvoyance to be quite different from what it at first is, it often remains undiscovered by many earnest seekers after the spiritual world. In this respect too the meeting with the guardian of the threshold is important. If the soul has been strengthened just in the direction of self-knowledge, this very meeting may merely be like the first gentle flitting-by of a spiritual vision; but it will not be so easily consigned to oblivion as other supersensible impressions, because people are more interested in their own being than in other things.

There is, however, no need at all that the meeting with the guardian should be one of the first clairvoyant experiences. The soul may be strengthened in various directions, and the first of such directions may bring other beings or events within its spiritual horizon before the meeting with the guardian takes place. Yet this meeting is sure to occur comparatively soon after entering the supersensible world.

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IX. Concerning the Ego-Feeling and the Human Soul's Capacity for Love; and the Relation of these to the Elemental World

WHEN the human soul consciously enters the elemental world, it finds itself obliged to change many of the ideas which it acquired in the physical world; but if the soul strengthens its forces to a corresponding degree, it will be quite fit for the change. Only if it shrinks from the effort of this acquiring strength, may it be seized by the feeling of losing, on entering the elemental world, the firm basis on which it must build up its inner life. The ideas which are gained in the physical world only offer an impediment to entering the elemental world as long as we try to keep them in exactly the same form in which we gained them. There is, however, no reason except habit for adhering to them in this way. It is also quite natural that the consciousness, which at first only lives in the physical world, should be accustomed to look upon the form of its ideas which it has shaped there, as the only possible one. And it is even more than natural, it is necessary. The life of the soul would never attain its inner solidarity, its necessary stability, if it did not develop a consciousness in the physical world which in a certain respect lived in fixed ideas, rigorously forced upon it. Through everything which life in the physical world can give the soul, is it able to enter the elemental world in such a way that it does not lose its independence and firmness of nature there. Strengthening and reinforcement of the life of the soul must be gained in order that that independence may not only be present as an unconscious quality of the soul on entering the elemental world, but may also be kept clearly in the consciousness. If the soul is too weak for conscious experience in the elemental world, on entering it the independence vanishes, just as a thought does which is not imprinted with sufficient clearness on the soul to live on as a distinct memory. In this case the soul cannot really enter the supersensible world at all with its consciousness. When it makes the attempt to enter, it is again and again thrown back into the physical world, by the being living within the soul which may be called the guardian of the threshold. And even if the soul has, so to speak, nibbled at the supersensible world, so that on sinking back into the physical world it retains something of the supersensible in its consciousness, such spoil from another sphere often only causes confusion in the life of thought.

It is quite impossible to fall into such confusion if the faculty of sound judgment, as it may be acquired in the physical world, be adequately cultivated. By thus reinforcing the faculty of judgment, the soul will develop the right relation to the events and beings of super-sensible worlds. For in order to live consciously in those worlds, an attitude of

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the soul is necessary which cannot be developed in the physical world with the same intensity with which it appears in supersensible worlds. This is the attitude of surrender to what is being experienced. We must steep ourselves in the experience and identify ourselves with it; and we must be able to do this to such a degree that we see ourselves outside our own being and feel ourselves within some other being. A transformation of our own being into the other with which we are having the experience must take place. If we do not possess this faculty of transformation, we cannot experience anything genuine in supersensible worlds. For there all experience is due to our being able to realise this feeling, "Now I am transformed in a certain definite way; now I am vitally present in a being which through its nature transforms mine in this particular way."

This transformation of self, this conscious projection of oneself into other beings, is life in supersensible worlds. By this process of conscious self-projection into others, we learn to know the beings and events of those worlds. We come to notice that with one being we have a certain degree of affinity; but that, by virtue of our own nature, we are further removed from another. Variations of inner experience come into view, which, especially in the elemental world, we must call sympathies and antipathies. For on encountering a being or event of the elemental world, we feel an experience emerging in the soul which may be denoted sympathy. By this experience we recognise the nature of the elemental being or event. But we must not think that experiences of sympathy and antipathy are only of account in proportion to their intensity or degree. In the physical world it is indeed in a certain sense true that we only speak of a strong or weak sympathy or antipathy as the case may be. In the elemental world, sympathies and antipathies are not only distinguishable by their intensity, but also in the same way as, for instance, colours may be distinguished from each other in the physical world. Just as we have a physical world of many colours, so can we experience an elemental world containing many sympathies or antipathies. It has also to be taken into account that antipathy in the elemental realm does not carry with it the meaning that we inwardly turn away from the thing so described; by antipathetic we simply mean a quality of the elemental being or event which bears a similar relation to the sympathetic quality of another event or being as does blue to red in the physical world.

We may speak of a "sense" which man is able to awaken for the elemental world in his etheric body. This sense is capable of perceiving sympathies and antipathies in the elemental world just as the eye becomes aware of colours and the ear of sounds in the physical world. And just as there one object is red and another blue, so the beings of the elemental world are such that one radiates a certain kind of sympathy, and another a certain kind of antipathy to our spiritual sight.

This experience of the elemental world through sympathies and antipathies is again something not confined to the clairvoyantly awakened soul; it is always at hand for every human soul, being part of its nature. But in the ordinary life of the soul the knowledge of this part of human nature is not developed. Man bears within him his etheric body; and through it is connected in manifold ways with beings and events of the elemental world. At one moment of his life he is woven with sympathies and antipathies into the elemental world in one way; at another moment in another way.

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The soul, however, cannot continuously so live as an etheric being that sympathies and antipathies are always active and clearly expressed within it. Just as waking life alternates with sleep in physical existence, so does a different state contrast with that of experiencing sympathies and antipathies in the elemental world. The soul may withdraw from all sympathies and antipathies and experience itself alone, regarding and feeling merely its own being. Indeed, this feeling may reach such a degree of intensity that we may speak of willing our own being. It is then a question of a condition of the soul's life not easy to describe, because in its pure, original nature it is of such a kind that nothing in the physical world resembles it except the strong, unalloyed ego-feeling or feeling of self in the soul.

As far as the elemental world is concerned we may describe this state as one in which the soul feels the impulse to say to itself with regard to the necessary surrender to experiences of sympathy and antipathy: "I will keep entirely to myself and within myself." And by a species of development of will the soul wrenches itself free from the state of surrender to the elemental experiences of sympathy and antipathy. This life in the self is, as it were, the sleeping state of the elemental world; whereas the surrender to events and beings is the waking state. When the human soul is awake in the elemental world and develops a wish to experience itself only, that is to say, feels the need of elemental sleep, it can obtain this by returning to the waking state of physical life with a fully developed feeling of self. For such experience, saturated with the feeling of self, in the physical world is synonymous with elemental sleep. It consists in the soul's being torn away from elemental experiences. It is literally true that to clairvoyant consciousness the life of the soul in the physical world is a spiritual sleep.

When awakening to the supersensible world takes place in rightly developed human clairvoyance, the memory of the soul's experiences in the physical world still remains. It must remain, otherwise other beings and events would be present in clairvoyant consciousness, but not the clairvoyant's own being. We should in that case have no knowledge of ourselves; we should not be living in the spirit ourselves; but other beings and events would be living in our soul.

Taking this into consideration, it will be clear that rightly developed clairvoyance must lay great stress on the cultivation of a strong ego-feeling. This ego-feeling developed with clairvoyance is by no means something which only enters the soul through clairvoyance; it is merely that we get to know that which always exists in the depths of the soul, but which remains unknown to the soul's ordinary life as it runs its course in the physical world.

The strong ego-feeling is not there through the etheric body as such, but through the soul which experiences itself in the physical body. If the soul does not bring that feeling with it into the clairvoyant state from its experience in the physical world, it will prove insufficiently equipped for experience in the elemental world.

On the other hand, it is essential for human consciousness within the physical world that the soul's feeling of self, its experience of the ego, although it must exist, should be modified. By this means it is possible for the soul to undergo within the physical world

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training for the noblest of moral forces, that of fellow-feeling, or feeling with another. If the strong ego-feeling were to project itself into the soul's conscious experiences within the physical world, moral impulses and ideas could not develop in the right way. They could not bring forth the fruit of love. But the faculty of self-surrender, a natural impulse in the elemental world, is not to be put on a par with what is called love in human experience. Elemental self-surrender means experiencing oneself in another being or event; love is the experiencing another being in one's own soul.

In order to develop the latter experience, the feeling of self, or ego-experience, present in the depths of the soul, must have, as it were, a veil drawn over it; and in consequence of the soul's own forces being thus dulled, one is able to feel within oneself the sorrows and joys of the other being: love, which is the source of all genuine morality in human life, springs up. Love is the most important result for man of his experience in the physical world. If we analyse the nature of love or fellow-feeling, we find it is the way in which spiritual reality is expressed in the physical world. It has already been said that it is in the nature of what is supersensible to become transformed into something else. If what is spiritual in man as he lives the physical life becomes so transformed that it dulls the ego-feeling and lives again as love, the spiritual remains true to its own elemental laws. We may say that on becoming clairvoyantly conscious the human soul awakes in the spiritual world; but we must say just as much that in love the spiritual awakens in the physical world. Where love and fellow-feeling are stirring in life, we sense the tragic breath of the spirit, interpenetrating the physical world. [In the preceding sentence, the translation of the German "Zauberhauch" is "tragic breath" ... a better translation might be, "magic touch." — e.Ed] Hence rightly developed clairvoyance can never weaken sympathy or love. The more completely the soul becomes at home in spiritual worlds, the more it feels lovelessness and lack of fellow-feeling to be a denial of spirit itself.

The experiences of consciousness which is becoming clairvoyant, manifest special peculiarities with regard to what has just been stated. Whereas the ego-feeling — necessary as it is for experience in supersensible worlds — is easily deadened, and often behaves like a weak, fading thought in the memory, feelings of hatred and lovelessness, and immoral impulses become intense experiences immediately after entering the supersensible world. They appear before the soul like reproaches come to life, and become terribly real pictures. In order not to be tormented by them, clairvoyant consciousness often has recourse to the expedient of looking about for spiritual forces which weaken the impressions of these pictures. But by doing so the soul steepes itself in these forces, which have an injurious effect on the newly-won clairvoyance. They drive it out of the good regions of the spiritual world, and towards the bad ones.

On the other hand, true love and real kindness of heart are experiences of the soul which strengthen the forces of consciousness in the way necessary for acquiring clairvoyance. When it is said that the soul needs preparation before it is able to have experiences in the supersensible world, it should be added that one of the many means of preparation is the capacity for true love, and the disposition towards genuine human kindness and fellow-feeling.

An over-developed ego-feeling in the physical world works against morality. An

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ego-feeling too feebly developed causes the soul, around which the storms of elemental sympathies and antipathies are actually playing, to be lacking in inner firmness and stability. These qualities can only exist when a sufficiently strong ego-feeling is working out of the experiences of the physical world upon the etheric body, which of course remains unknown in ordinary life. But in order to develop a really moral temper of mind it is necessary that the ego-feeling, though it must exist, should be moderated by feelings of good-fellowship, sympathy, and love.

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X. Concerning the Boundary between the Physical World and Supersensible Worlds

IN order to understand the mutual relations of the various worlds, we must take into account the fact that a force which in one world is bound to develop activity in conformity with the order of the universe, may, when it comes to be developed in another world, be directed against that order. Therefore it is necessary for man's being that there should exist in his etheric body the two opposing forces, the capacity for transformation into other beings, and the strong ego-feeling, or feeling of self. Neither of these forces of the human soul can be unfolded in physical existence except in a deadened form. In the elemental world they exist in such a way as to make man's being possible by their mutual balance, just as sleep and the waking state make human life in the physical world possible. The relation of two such opposing forces can never be that of one effacing the other, but must be of such a kind that both are developed and act upon each other in the way of balance or compensation.

Now it is only in the elemental world that the ego-feeling and the capacity for transformation act upon each other in the way indicated; the physical world can only be worked upon, in conformity with the order of the universe, by the result of these two forces in their mutual relationship and cooperation. If the capacity for transformation which it is necessary for a person to possess in his etheric body were to extend in the same degree to physical existence, he would feel himself in his soul as something which in considering his physical body he is not. The physical body gives man in its own world a certain fixed stamp, by means of which he is put into that world as a particular personal being. He is not put into the elemental world with his etheric body in this manner. In the elemental world, in order to be a human being in the full sense, he must be able to assume the most varied forms. If this were impossible to him, he would be condemned to complete isolation in the elemental world; he would not be able to know about anything in it except himself; for he would not feel himself related to any other being or event. This, in the elemental world would be equivalent to the non-existence of those beings or events, as far as such a person was concerned.

If, however, the human soul were to develop in the physical world the capacity for transformation necessary for the elemental world, its personal identity would be lost. Such a soul would be living in contradiction with itself. In the physical world, the capacity for transformation must be a power at rest in the depths of the soul; a power which

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gives the soul its fundamental tone or keynote, but which does not come to development in that world.

Clairvoyant consciousness has therefore to live itself into the capacity for transformation; if it were not able to do this, it could make no observations in the elemental world. It thus acquires a faculty which it should only bring to bear so long as it knows itself to be in the elemental world, and which it must suppress as soon as it returns to the physical world. Clairvoyant consciousness must ever observe the boundary of the two worlds, and must not use in the physical world faculties adapted for a supersensible world. If the soul, knowing itself to be in the physical world, were to allow the capacity for transformation possessed by its etheric body to go on working, ordinary consciousness would become filled with conceptions which do not correspond to any being in the physical world. Confusion would reign in the life of the soul's thought.

Observation of the boundary between the worlds is a necessary presupposition for the right working of clairvoyant consciousness. One who wants to acquire this consciousness must be careful that no disturbing element creeps into his ordinary consciousness through his knowledge of supersensible worlds.

If we learn to know the guardian of the threshold we know the state of our soul with regard to the physical world, and whether it is strong enough to banish from physical consciousness the forces and faculties, belonging to supersensible worlds, which should not be allowed to be active in ordinary consciousness. If the supersensible world is entered without the self-knowledge brought about by the guardian of the threshold, we may be overwhelmed by the experiences of that world. These experiences may thrust themselves into physical consciousness as illusive pictures.

In that case they assume the character of sense-perceptions, and the necessary consequence is that the soul takes them for realities when they are not so. Rightly developed clairvoyance will never take the pictures of the elemental world for reality in the sense in which physical consciousness has to take the experiences of the physical world as realities. The pictures of the elemental world are only brought into their true association with the realities to which they correspond, by the soul's faculty of transformation.

Again, the second force necessary for the etheric body — the strong ego-feeling — should not be projected into the soul's life within the physical world in the same way as is appropriate for it in the elemental world. If it is, it then becomes a source of immoral propensities, as far as these are connected with egoism. It is at this point in its observation of the universe that spiritual science finds the origin of evil in human action. It would be misunderstanding the order of the world to surrender oneself to the belief that this order could be maintained without the forces which form the source of evil. If these forces were non-existent, the etheric being of man could not come to development in the elemental world. These forces are entirely good when they come into operation in the elemental world only. They bring about evil when they do not remain at rest in the depths of the soul, there regulating man's relation to the elemental world, but are transferred to the soul's experience within the physical world and are changed thereby into selfish impulses. In this case they work against the faculty of love and thus become the causes of

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immoral action.

If the strong ego-feeling passes from the etheric to the physical body, it not only effects a strengthening of egoism, but a weakening of the etheric body. Clairvoyant consciousness has to make the discovery that on entering the supersensible world, the necessary ego-feeling is weak in proportion as egoism in the experiences of the physical world is strong. Egoism does not make a human being strong in the depths of his soul, but weak. And when man passes through the gateway of death, the effect of the egoism which has been developed during the life between birth and death is such as to make the soul weak for the experiences of the supersensible world.

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XI. Concerning Beings of the Spirit-Worlds

IF the soul enters the supersensible world with clairvoyant consciousness, it learns to know itself there in a way of which in the physical world it can have no conception. It finds that through its faculty of transformation it becomes acquainted with beings to whom it is more or less related; but in addition to this it becomes aware of meeting beings in the supersensible world to whom it is not only related, but with whom it must compare itself, in order to know itself. And it further observes that these beings in supersensible worlds have become what the soul itself, through its adventures and experiences in the physical world, has become. In the elemental world beings confront the human soul who have developed within that world powers and faculties which man himself can only unfold through still having about him his physical body, in addition to his etheric body and the other supersensible principles of his being. The beings here alluded to have no such body with physical senses. They have so evolved that through their etheric body they have a soul-nature such as man has through his physical body. Although to a certain degree they are beings of like nature to himself, they differ from him in not being subject to the conditions of the physical world. They have no senses of the kind which man possesses. Their knowledge is like man's; only they have not acquired it through the gateway of the senses, but through a kind of ascent, or mounting-up of their ideas and other soul-experiences out of the depths of their being. Their inner life is, as it were, at rest within them, and they draw it up out of the depths of their souls, as man from the depths of his soul draws up his memory-pictures.

In this way man becomes acquainted with beings who have become within the supersensible world that which he may become within the physical world. Owing to this, these beings are a stage higher than man in the order of the universe, although they may be said to be, in the manner indicated, of the same nature as he. They constitute a kingdom above man, a hierarchy superior to him in the scale of beings. Notwithstanding their similarity to man, their etheric body is different from his. Whereas man is woven into the supersensible etheric body of the earth through the sympathies and antipathies of his etheric body, these beings are not earth-bound in the life of their soul.

If man observes what these beings experience through their etheric bodies, he finds that their experiences are similar to those of his own soul. They have thinking power; they have feelings and a will. But through their etheric body they develop something which man can only develop through the physical body. Through their etheric body they

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arrive at a consciousness of their own being, although man would not be able to know anything about a supersensible being unless he carried up into supersensible worlds the forces which he acquires in the physical body.

Clairvoyant consciousness learns to know these beings through developing a faculty for observing them by the help of the human etheric body. This clairvoyant consciousness lifts the human soul up into the world in which these beings have their field of activity and their abode. Not till the soul experiences itself in that world, do pictures or conceptions arise in its consciousness which bring about knowledge of these beings. For these beings do not interpose directly in the physical world, nor therefore in man's physical body. They are not present in the experiences which may be made through that body. They are spiritual, supersensible beings, who do not, so to say, set foot in the physical world.

If man does not respect the boundary between the physical world and supersensible worlds, it may happen that he drags into his physical consciousness supersensible images which are not the true expression of these beings. These images arise through experiencing the Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings, who though of like nature to the supersensible beings just described, are contrasted with them through having transferred their field of activity and their abodes to the world which man perceives as the physical world.

When man with clairvoyant consciousness contemplates the Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings from the supersensible world, after having through his experience with the guardian of the threshold, learned the right way to observe the boundary between that world and physical existence, he learns to know these beings in their reality, and to distinguish them from those other spiritual beings who have remained in the sphere of action adapted to their nature. It is from this standpoint that spiritual science must portray the Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings.

It then appears that the field of activity adapted to the Luciferic beings is not the physical but, in a certain respect, the elemental world. When something penetrates into the human soul which rises as though out of the waves of that world like pictures, and when these pictures work with a vivifying effect on man's etheric body, without assuming an illusive existence in the soul, then the Luciferic essence may be present in these images, without its activity transgressing against the order of the universe. In this case the Luciferic nature has the effect of emancipation upon the human soul, raising it above mere entanglement in the physical world.

But when the human soul draws into the physical body the life which it should only develop in the elemental world, when it allows feeling within the physical body to be influenced by sympathies and antipathies which should only hold sway in the etheric body, then the Luciferic nature gains through that soul an influence which is opposed to the general order of the universe. This influence is always present when in the sympathies and antipathies of the physical world, something is working besides that love which is based on sympathy with the life of another being present in that world. Such a being may be loved because it comes before the one loving it endowed with certain qualities;

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in this case there is no admixture of a Luciferic element with the love. Love which has its basis in those qualities in the beloved being which are manifest in physical existence, keeps clear of Luciferic interference. But love, the source of which is not thus in the beloved being, but in the one loving it, is prone to the Luciferic influence. A being loved because it has qualities to which, as lovers, we incline by nature, is loved with that part of the soul which is accessible to the Luciferic element.

We should therefore never say that the Luciferic element is bad under all circumstances, for events and beings of supersensible worlds must be loved by the human soul in the manner of the Luciferic element. The order of the universe is not transgressed until the kind of love with which man ought to feel himself drawn to the supersensible is directed to physical things. Love for the supersensible rightly calls forth in the one loving it an enhanced feeling of self; love which in the physical world is sought for the sake of such an enhanced feeling of self is equivalent to a Luciferic temptation. Love of the spiritual when it is sought for the sake of the self has the effect of emancipation; but love for the physical when it is sought on account of the self has not this effect, but, through the gratification gained by its means, only puts the self in fetters.

The Ahrimanic beings make themselves felt in the thinking soul just as the Luciferic beings affect the feeling soul. The former chain thought to the physical world. They turn it away from the fact that thoughts of any kind are only of importance when they assert themselves as part of the universal order, whose discovery is not bound within physical existence. In the world into which the human life of the soul is woven, the Ahrimanic element must exist as a necessary counterbalance to the Luciferic. Without the Luciferic element, the soul would dream away its life in observation of physical existence, and feel no impulse to rise above it. Without the counter-effect of the Ahrimanic element, the soul would fall a victim to the Luciferic influence; it would underrate the importance of the physical world, in spite of the fact that some of its necessary conditions of existence are in that world. It would not wish to have anything to do with the physical world. The Ahrimanic element has the right degree of importance in the human soul when it leads to a way of living in the physical world which is suitable to that world; when we take it for what it is, and are able to dispense with everything in it which in its nature must be transitory.

It is quite impossible to say that a person could avoid falling a victim to the Luciferic and Ahrimanic elements by rooting them out of himself. It is, for instance, possible that if the Luciferic element in him were rooted out, his soul would no longer aspire to the supersensible; or, if the Ahrimanic element were eradicated, that he might not any more realise the full importance of the physical world: the right relation to one of these elements is arrived at when the proper counterpoise to it is provided in the other. All harmful effects from these cosmic beings proceed entirely from one of them becoming the unlimited master of the situation, whatever it may be, and from not being brought into the right harmony through the opposite force.

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XII. Concerning Spiritual Cosmic Beings

WHEN clairvoyant consciousness comes to life in the elemental world, it finds beings there who are able to develop a life in that world which man only acquires within the physical world. These beings do not feel their self — their ego — as man feels his in the physical world; they permeate that self with their will much more than man does his; they will their own existence as it were, and feel their existence as something which they give to themselves through their will. On the other hand, with regard to their thinking, they have not the feeling that they are creating their thoughts, as man creates his; they feel all their thoughts as suggestions, as something which is not in them but in the universe, and which is streaming out of the universe into their being. Thus in these beings no doubt can ever arise but that their thoughts are the reflection of the thought-order poured forth into the universe. They do not think their own thoughts, but cosmic thoughts.

With their activity of thought they live in cosmic thoughts; but they will their existence. Their life of feeling is shaped in accordance with this will and thought of theirs. They feel themselves to be a link in the whole cosmic system; and they feel the necessity of willing their existence in a manner corresponding to that system.

When the clairvoyant soul grows familiar with the world inhabited by these beings, it comes naturally to an idea of its own thinking, feeling, and willing. These faculties of the human soul could not be unfolded within the elemental world in man's etheric body. Human will would be only a weak, dreamlike faculty in the elemental world, human thought merely an indistinct, fleeting world of ideas. No feeling of the ego would come into existence there at all. For all these things it is necessary for man to be invested with a physical body.

When the clairvoyant human soul ascends from the elemental world into the spiritual world proper, it experiences itself in conditions which diverge still further than do elemental conditions from those of the physical world. In the elemental world there is still much that is reminiscent of the physical world; but in the spiritual world man confronts entirely new conditions. He can do nothing there if he has only the ideas which are to be gained in the physical world. All the same, man's inner life as a human soul in the physical world must be so strengthened that he will bring over from that world into the spiritual world that which makes a sojourn there possible. If such a strengthened life of the soul were not brought into the spiritual world, man would simply lapse into uncon-

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sciousness there. He could only be present there in the same sort of way in which a plant is present in the physical world. We have, as human souls, to bring with us into the spiritual world all those things not really existing in the physical world but manifesting themselves there nevertheless as if they were existent. We must be able to form conceptions in the physical world, which, though prompted by that world, do not directly correspond to any thing or occurrence in it. Every delineation of things in the physical world, or description of physical occurrences, is meaningless in the spiritual world. What may be perceived with the senses, or expressed in conceptions applicable in the physical world, does not exist in the spiritual world.

On entering the latter, everything to which physical ideas can be applied must, so to speak, be left behind. But ideas which have been so formed in the physical world that they do not correspond to any physical thing or process, are still present in the soul when it enters the spiritual world. Naturally some of these ideas may have been formed erroneously. If these are present in the consciousness on its entering the spiritual world, by their very being they prove themselves as not belonging to that world. They act in such a way as to impress on the soul the urgency of returning to the physical world or the elemental world, in order to exchange these erroneous ideas for the right ones. But when the soul brings correct ideas into the spiritual world, what is related to them in that world presses to meet them; the soul feels in the spiritual world that actual beings are present there, who actually are in their whole inner substance what only appear as thoughts within itself.

These beings have a body, which may be called a thought-body. In this body they experience themselves as independent beings, just as man experiences himself independently with the physical world.

Now amongst the conceptions acquired by man, there are certain thoughts saturated with feelings which are adapted to strengthen the life of the soul in such a way that it is able to receive an impression from the beings of the spiritual world. When the feeling of self-surrender, such as must be developed for the faculty of transformation in the elemental world, becomes so much intensified that in that surrender the being into which we are transformed is felt not merely as sympathetic or antipathetic, but can live again in its own special way in the soul surrendered to it, then the faculty of perception of the spiritual world is coming into existence. Then one spiritual being speaks, as it were, in one way to the soul, another in another way; and a spiritual intercourse ensues, which consists in a language of thoughts. We experience thoughts; but we know that we are experiencing beings in these thoughts. To live in beings who do not merely express themselves in thoughts, but are actually present in those thoughts with their individuality, is to live with the soul in the spiritual world.

With regard, however, to the beings of the elemental world, the soul has the feeling that they have the cosmic thoughts flowing into their own individual beings, and that they will their own existence in conformity with this universal thought streaming into them.

But with regard to the beings who need not descend to the elemental world to

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gain that which man can only gain in the physical world, and who attain that stage of existence in the spiritual world, the human soul has the feeling that they consist wholly of thought substance ; that not only do the cosmic thoughts flow into them, but that the beings themselves actually live in that movement of thought with their individuality. They entirely allow the cosmic thoughts to think themselves within them in a living way. Their life consists in the apprehension of this cosmic language of thought, and their willing consists in their being able to express themselves in thought. This thought-existence of theirs reacts vitally upon the universe, for thoughts which are beings converse with other thoughts which are also beings.

Human thoughts are the reflection of this spiritual life of thought-beings. During the period through which the human soul passes between death and rebirth, it is woven into this life of thought-beings, just as it is woven into physical existence between birth and death. When the soul enters physical existence through birth, or rather through conception, the permanent thought-entity of the soul works in a shaping and inspiring way on the fate of that soul. In human destiny what has remained of the soul from the earth-lives preceding the present one, works in the same way as pure living thought-beings work in the universe.

When clairvoyant consciousness enters this spiritual world of living thought-beings, it feels itself to be in a completely new relationship towards the physical world. The latter confronts it in the spiritual world as another world, just as in the physical world the spiritual world appears as another one. But to spiritual sight the physical world has lost everything which can be perceived of it within physical existence. All those qualities seem to have vanished which are grasped with the senses, or the intellect which is bound up with the senses. On the other hand, it is obvious from the standpoint of the spiritual world that the true, original nature of the physical world is itself spiritual. To the soul's gaze, looking from the spiritual world, there appear instead of the previous physical world, spiritual beings unfolding their activities in such a way that through the converging of those activities that world comes into being which, looked at through the senses, is the very world that man has before him in his own physical existence. Seen from the spiritual world, the qualities, forces, materials, etc., of the physical world disappear as such, and are revealed as mere appearances. From the spiritual world man sees only beings, and in them lies true reality.

Similarly from the elemental world, when beheld from the spiritual world, there vanishes everything which is not actual being. And the soul feels that in this world too, it has to do with beings who, by letting their activities converge, cause an existence to become manifest which through the organs of sympathy and antipathy appears as elemental.

The essential part of projecting one's life into supersensible worlds consists in the fact that beings take the place of the conditions and qualities which the consciousness has around it in the physical world. The supersensible world reveals itself ultimately as a world of beings, and whatever exists in addition to those beings is the expression of their actions. Indeed, both the physical world and the elemental world appear as the deeds of spiritual beings.

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XIII. The First Beginnings of Man's Physical Body

EARLIER in this book mention was made of a Moon and Sun condition, preceding the Earth condition, and only in that Moon period do there appear to clairvoyant consciousness impressions which are reminiscent of the impressions of earth-life. Such impressions are no longer to be gained when clairvoyant sight is directed to the still further distant past of the earth's Sun condition. The latter is revealed wholly as a world of beings and the actions of those beings.

In order to get an impression of this Sun period, it is necessary to keep at a distance all ideas of the earth's mineral and plant life. For such ideas only have a meaning with regard to earlier conditions of the earth period; and, those of them which concern plant-life, to the long-past Moon period. To the earth's ancient Sun condition conceptions lead which may be prompted by the animal and human kingdoms of nature — conceptions, however, which do not merely portray what the senses disclose about the inhabitants of those kingdoms.

Now the clairvoyant consciousness of man finds within the etheric body active forces which form themselves into pictures of such a kind that they bring to expression the way in which the etheric body received, through the actions of spiritual beings during the ancient Sun period, its first beginning in the cosmic order of things. This beginning may be traced in its further development through the Moon and Earth periods. We find that in the course of these it was transformed, and through this transformation became what is now seen to be the active etheric body of man.

In order to understand the physical body of man, we require, however, a different activity of human consciousness. At first it appears as an outer counterpart of the etheric body. But close observation shows that man could never arrive at a complete development of his being, unless the physical body were something more than merely a physical manifestation of the etheric body.

If this were so, definite willing, feeling, and thinking would take place in man, but they could not be so synthesised that the consciousness which expresses itself as an ego-experience could arise in the human soul. This becomes specially evident when the consciousness develops the quality of clairvoyance. Man's ego-experience can at first only take place in the physical world, when he is invested with his physical body. Thence he is able to take his experience into the elemental and spiritual worlds and interpenetrate

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his etheric and astral bodies with it. For man has an etheric and an astral body in which the ego-experience does not at first arise. Only in his physical body can that experience take place. Now if the human physical body is looked at from the spiritual world, it turns out that there is something in it, belonging to it intrinsically, which even from the spiritual world is not fully disclosed in its reality. If the consciousness enters the spiritual world in a clairvoyant capacity, the soul grows familiar with the world of thought-reality; but the ego experience, which through an adequate strengthening of soul-force may be carried into that world, is not woven simply out of universal thoughts; it does not yet feel in the world of cosmic thoughts anything in that environment which is equal to its own being. In order to feel this, the soul must advance still further into the supersensible. It must come to experiences in which it is abandoned even by thoughts, so that all physical experiences and all experiences also of thinking, feeling, and willing are, as it were, left behind it on its journey into the supersensible.

Then for the first time does it feel itself one with a reality which so underlies the universe that it takes precedence of everything which man, as a physical, etheric, and astral being, is able to observe. Man then feels himself in a still higher sphere than the spiritual world so far known to him. We will call this world in which only the ego can experience itself, the super-spiritual world. From it even the region of thought-reality seems an outer world. When clairvoyant consciousness is transferred to this super-spiritual world, it goes through an experience which may be described and characterised somewhat as follows, by tracing the path followed by clairvoyant consciousness through its various stages.

When the soul feels itself in its etheric body, and elemental events and beings are its environment, it knows it is outside the physical body; but that physical body still exists as an entity, although when seen from without it appears transformed. To spiritual sight a part of it becomes detached, and is manifest as the expression of the deeds of spiritual beings who have been active from the beginning of the earth's existence up to the present time. Another detached part appears as the expression of something which was already in existence during the ancient Moon condition of the earth. This state of things continues as long as the consciousness is only experiencing itself in the elemental world. In that world the consciousness is able to become aware of the way in which man was constituted as a physical being during the ancient Moon period.

When the consciousness enters the spiritual world, another part of the physical body becomes detached. It is the part which was formed during the Moon period by the deeds of spiritual beings. But another part is left behind. It is that which existed during the Sun condition of the earth as man's physical entity at that period. But even of this physical entity something is left behind, when, from the standpoint of the spiritual world, everything is taken into account which happened during the Sun period through the deeds of spiritual beings.

What is then left behind is first revealed as the action of spiritual beings when the consciousness reaches the super-spiritual world. It is revealed as already existent at the beginning of the Sun period, and we have to go back to a condition of the earth before its Sun period. In my book *Occult Science*, I endeavoured to vindicate the use of the term

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Saturn period for this condition of the earth's existence. In this sense the earth was Saturn before it became Sun. And during that Saturn period the first beginning of the physical human body came into existence out of the cosmic world?process through the deeds of spiritual beings. That beginning was afterwards so transformed during the succeeding Sun, Moon, and Earth periods by the further actions of other spiritual beings that the present physical human body became what it now is.

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XIV. Concerning Man's Real Ego

WHEN the soul experiences itself in its astral body and has living thought-beings as its environment, it knows itself to be outside both the physical and etheric bodies. But it also feels that its thinking, feeling, and willing belong but to a limited sphere of the universe, whereas in virtue of its own original nature it should embrace much more than is allotted to it in that sphere.

The soul that has become clairvoyant may say to itself within the spiritual world: "In the physical world I am confined to what my physical body allows me to observe; in the elemental world I am limited by my etheric body; in the spiritual world I am restricted by finding myself, as it were, upon an island in the universe and by feeling my spiritual existence bounded by the shores of that island. Beyond them is a world which I should be able to perceive if I were to work my way through the veil which is woven before the eyes of my spirit by the actions of living thought-beings." Now the soul is indeed able to work its way through this veil, if it continues to develop further and further the faculty of self surrender which is already necessary for its life in the elemental world. It is under the necessity of still further strengthening the forces which accrue to it from experience in the physical world, in order to be guarded in supersensible worlds from having its consciousness deadened, clouded, or even annihilated.

In the physical world the soul, in order to experience thoughts within itself, has need only of the strength naturally allotted to it apart from its own inner work. In the elemental world thoughts, which immediately on arising fall into oblivion, are softened down to dreamlike experience, i.e. do not come into the consciousness at all, unless the soul, before entering this world, has worked on the strengthening of its inner life. For this purpose it must specially strengthen the will-power, for in the elemental world a thought is no longer merely a thought; it has an inner activity, or life of its own. It has to be held fast by the will if it is not to leave the circle of the consciousness.

In the spiritual world thoughts are completely independent living beings. If they are to remain in the consciousness, the soul must be so strengthened that it develops within itself and of itself the force which the physical body develops for it in the physical world, and which in the elemental world is developed by the sympathies and antipathies of the etheric body. It must forgo all this assistance in the spiritual world. There the experiences of the physical world and the elemental world are only present to the soul as memories. And the soul itself is beyond those two worlds. Around it is the spiritual

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world. This world at first makes no impression upon the astral body. The soul has to learn to live by itself on its own memories. The content of its consciousness is at first merely this: "I have existed, and now I am confronting nothingness." But when the memories come from such soul-experiences as are not merely reproductions of physical or elemental occurrences, but represent free thought-experiences induced by those occurrences, there begins in the soul an exchange of thought between the memories and the supposed nothingness of the spiritual environment. And that which arises as the result of that intercourse becomes a world of conceptions in the consciousness of the astral body. The strength which is needful for the soul at this point of its development is such as will make it capable of standing on the shore of the only world hitherto known to it, and of enduring the facing of supposed nothingness.

This supposed nothingness is at first an absolutely real nothingness to the soul. Yet the soul still has, so to speak, behind it the world of its memories. It can, as it were, take a firm grip of them. It can live in them. And the more it lives in them, the more it strengthens the forces of the astral body. With this strengthening begins the intercourse between its past existence and the beings of the spiritual world. During this intercourse the soul learns to feel itself as an astral being. To use an expression in keeping with ancient traditions, we may say, "The human soul experiences itself as an astral being within the cosmic Word." By the cosmic Word are here meant the thought-deeds of living thought-beings, which are enacted in the spiritual world like a living discourse of spirits; but in such a way that the discourse exactly corresponds in the spiritual world to deeds in the physical world.

If the soul now wishes to step over into the super-spiritual world, it must efface, by its own will, its memories of the physical and elemental worlds. It can only do this when it has gained the certainty, from the spirit discourse, that it will not wholly lose its existence if it effaces everything in itself which so far the consciousness of that existence has given it. The soul must actually place itself at the edge of a spiritual abyss and there make an act of will to forget its willing, feeling, and thinking. It must consciously renounce its past. The resolution that has to be taken at this point may be called a bringing about of complete sleep of the consciousness by one's own will, not by conditions of the physical or etheric body. Only this resolution must not be thought of as having for its object a return, after an interval of unconsciousness, to the same consciousness that was previously there, but as if that consciousness, by means of the resolution, really plunges into forgetfulness by its own act of will.

It must be borne in mind that this process is not possible in either the physical or the elemental world, but only in the spiritual world. In the physical world the annihilation which appears as death is possible; in the elemental world there is no death. Man, in so far as he belongs to the elemental world, cannot die; he can only be transformed into another being. In the spiritual world, however, no positive transformation, in the strict sense of the word, is possible; for into whatever a human being may change, his past experience is revealed in the spiritual world as his own conscious existence. If this memory existence is to disappear within the spiritual world, it must be because the soul itself, by an act of will, has caused it to sink into oblivion. Clairvoyant consciousness is

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able to perform such an act of will when it has won the necessary inner strength. If it arrives at this, there emerges from the forgetfulness it has itself brought about the real nature of the ego. The super-spiritual environment gives the human soul the knowledge of that real ego. Just as clairvoyant consciousness can experience itself in the etheric and astral bodies, so too can it experience itself in the real ego.

This real ego is not created by clairvoyance; it exists in the depths of every human soul. Clairvoyant consciousness simply experiences consciously a fact appertaining to the nature of every human soul, of which it is not conscious.

After physical death man gradually lives himself into his spiritual environment. At first his being emerges into it with memories of the physical world. Then, although he has not the assistance of his physical body, he can nevertheless live consciously in those memories, because the living thought-beings corresponding to them incorporate themselves into the memories, so that the latter no longer have the merely shadowy existence peculiar to them in the physical world. And at a definite point of time between death and rebirth, the living thought-beings of the spiritual environment exert such a strong influence that, without any act of will, the oblivion which has been described is brought about. And at that moment life emerges in the real ego. Clairvoyant consciousness, by strengthening the life of the soul, brings about as a free action of the spirit that which is, so to speak, a natural occurrence between death and rebirth. Nevertheless, memory of previous earth-lives can never arise within physical experience, unless the thoughts have, during those earth-lives, been directed to the spiritual world. It is always necessary first to have known of a thing in order that a clearly recognisable remembrance of it may arise later. Therefore we must, during one earth-life, gain knowledge of ourselves as spiritual beings if we are to be justified in expecting that in our next earthly existence we shall be able to remember a former one.

Yet this knowledge need not necessarily be gained through clairvoyance. When a person acquires a direct knowledge of the spiritual world through clairvoyance, there may arise in his soul, during the earth-lives following the one in which he gained that knowledge, a memory of the former one, in the same way in which the memory of a personal experience presents itself in physical existence. In the case, however, of one who penetrates into spiritual science with true comprehension, through without clairvoyance, the memory will occur in such a form that it may be compared with the remembrance in physical existence of an event of which he has only heard a description.

XV. Summary of Part of the Foregoing

MAN bears within him a real ego, which belongs to a super-spiritual world. In the physical world this real ego is, as it were, concealed by the experiences of thinking, feeling, and willing. Even in the spiritual world man only becomes aware of his real ego when he effaces in himself the memories of everything which he is able to experience through his thinking, feeling, and willing. The knowledge of the real ego emerges out of forgetfulness of what is experienced in the physical world, the elemental world, and the spiritual world.

The human physical body is revealed in its true nature when the soul beholds it

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from the super-spiritual world. Then it becomes evident that that body first took its rise out of the universal cosmic process during a Saturn period which preceded the Sun period of the earth. Subsequently, during the Sun, Moon, and Earth periods, it developed into what the human physical body is at present.

In accordance with the foregoing, man's collective being may be expressed in tabular form as follows:

I. The physical body in the environment of the physical world. By its means man recognises himself as an independent individual being or ego. This physical body was formed, at its first beginning, from the universal cosmic essence during a long-past Saturn period of the earth, and through its development during four planetary metamorphoses of the earth has become what it now is.

II. The subtle, ethcric body in the elemental environment. By its means man recognises himself as a member of the earth's elemental or vital body. This body was formed, at its first beginning, from the universal cosmic essence during a long-past Sun period of the earth, and through its development during three planetary metamorphoses of the earth has become what it now is.

III. The astral body in a spiritual environment. Through it man is a member of a spiritual world. In it is situated man's other self which realises itself in repeated earth-lives.

IV. The real ego in a super-spiritual environment. In this man finds himself as a spiritual being, even when all experiences of the physical, elemental, and spiritual worlds, and therefore all experiences of the senses and of thinking, feeling, and willing, sink into oblivion.

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XVI. Remarks on the Connection of what is described in this Book with the Accounts given in my Books Theosophy and Occult Science

NAMES which are to express the experiences of the human soul in the elemental and spiritual worlds must be adapted to the special characteristics of those experiences. In giving such names it will have to be borne in mind that even in the elemental world experience runs its course in quite a different way from that in which it does in the physical world. Experience in the elemental world is due to the soul's capacity for transformation and to its observation of sympathies and antipathies. The terminology will necessarily assume something of the changeful character of such experiences. It cannot be as fixed and rigid as it must be with regard to the physical world. One who does not keep in view this fact, arising out of the nature of the case, may easily find a contradiction between the terminology used in this book and that in Theosophy and Occult Science. The contradiction disappears when it is remembered that in the two latter works the names are so chosen that they characterise those experiences which the soul has during its complete development between birth (conception) and death on the one hand, and between death and rebirth on the other. In this book, however, the names are given with reference to the experiences of clairvoyant consciousness when it enters the elemental world and the spiritual spheres.

It is seen from Theosophy and Occult Science that soon after the detachment of the physical body from the soul at death, there is also detached from the soul that which in this book is called the etheric body. The soul then lives for a while in the entity which is here called the astral body. The etheric body, after being detached from the soul, is transformed within the elemental world. It passes into the beings forming that world. When this transformation of the etheric body takes place, the soul which had lived in it is no longer there. The soul, however, experiences as its outer world after death the processes of the elemental world. This experience of the elemental world "from without" is described in Theosophy and Occult Science as the passage of the soul through the "soul-world." It must therefore be realised that this soul-world is identical with that which, from the standpoint of clairvoyant consciousness, is in this book called the elemental world.

When the soul in the interval between death and rebirth — as described in Theosophy — becomes detached from its astral body, it goes on living in the entity which is here called the real ego. The astral body then experiences by itself, the soul being no

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longer with it, that which has been described above as oblivion. It plunges, so to speak, into a world in which there is nothing which can be observed with the senses, or experienced in the way in which will, feeling and thought, as man develops them in his physical body, experience things. This world is experienced as its outer world by the soul which continues to exist in the real ego. If it is desirable to characterise the experience in this outer world, it can be done in the same way in which it is described in Theosophy and Occult Science, as the passing through the “spirit region.” The soul, experiencing itself in the real ego, has around it within the spiritual world that which has been formed in it as soul-experiences during physical existence. Within the world above described as that of living thoughts-beings, the soul finds between death and rebirth all that it has experienced in its inner being during physical existence through its sense perceptions and its thinking, feeling, and willing.

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